



Upon Bucuti & Tara receiving the World Travel & Tourism Council's
Tourism for Tomorrow's 2019 Global Climate Action Award:

"On the face of it, the Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort appears to be nothing more than another spectacularly indulgent Caribbean destination. What visitors may not realise, however, is that this is the Caribbean's only carbon-neutral resort."

– The Telegraph, 4 April 2019

ACHIEVEMENT

On August 28, 2018, [Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort](#) achieved certification as the [Caribbean's first carbon-neutral/net-zero hotel](#). Not one to rest, the very next day, on August 29, Bucuti & Tara embarked on its journey to carbon negative status. Already in 2020, the resort became the Caribbean's first resort awarded LEED Gold certification at its most stringent level ever, v4.1. Additionally, as COVID-19 has griped the world, Bucuti & Tara has implemented [hi-tech, hospital-grade safety and health protocols](#) that protect the guests and staff as much as they do the safety of the planet.

As the Caribbean's top resort achieved carbon neutrality and works towards carbon negativity, this significant accomplishment of erasing its carbon footprint resulted by employing as [many](#)



[initiatives](#) possible to close the gap of carbon output. The miniscule resulting gap was offset with carbon credits through its local wind farm and a windfarm in India that provide UN-approved offsets.

CarbonNeutral® is a global standard awarded to businesses that have reduced their (CO2) greenhouse gas emissions, which trap heat in the atmosphere, to net zero. Through the carbon neutrality certification process, Bucuti & Tara worked with SCS Global Services, a global leader in third-party environmental and sustainability verification, to verify the emissions of resort operations and Natural Capital Partners, carbon offset experts in the delivery of solutions for positive impact on carbon, renewable energy, biodiversity and water.

“Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort has set the benchmark high with its sustainability program and we’re delighted that CarbonNeutral® certification has been added to its achievements, demonstrating the commitment to net zero emissions that leading businesses throughout the world are achieving,” said Saskia Feast, VP Western Region, Natural Capital Partners.

“Tourism is not the pillar of our economy, nature is. As without our unspoiled nature there is no tourism.” Ewald Biemans, owner/CEO of Bucuti & Tara and noted environmentalist, has long shared these words.

If the current pace of climate change continues, the United Nations estimates by 2050 there will be as many as one billion climate change refugees. The Caribbean community with its vulnerable coastlines already feels it. It would be devastating to lose the Caribbean’s rich history and contributions to the world, tapestry of cultures and stunning island communities forever. Bucuti & Tara’s location on the widest expanse of Eagle Beach, Aruba, is a treasured, postcard-perfect location at the heart of every guests’ vacation experience. Its pristine white sand beach is so vast that it’s dotted with cushioned loungers surrounded by the most space per person of any hotel on island. However, rising sea levels threaten to reach its doors in 30 years. “If climate change continues, we will have to use snorkel gear to admire our world-renowned beach,” says Ewald Biemans.

OVERVIEW

Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort is a 104-room property nestled on Eagle Beach, Aruba, one of the “Dream Beaches of the World.” As an adults-only enclave, its known for romance, wellness and sustainability.

Peace and tranquility reign. Bucuti & Tara doesn’t host families, groups or large weddings, for it decided long ago it did not have to be all things to all people. However, Bucuti & Tara also decided long ago that is was and remains committed to all people by [holding itself completely accountable](#) to being [responsible stewards of the planet](#) and inspiring others to do the same.



Among the many distinctions received, Bucuti & Tara is [the most eco-certified resort](#) in the Caribbean as well as TripAdvisor’s No. 8 Hotel for Romance in the World and the Caribbean’s No. 1 Hotel, No. 1 Hotel for Romance and No. 1 Hotel for Best Service. It is routinely recognized by *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Travel + Leisure* and other major mainstream and travel media outlets.

Humming at 95%+ year-round occupancy, maintaining five-bubble ratings and a legion of loyal followers, Bucuti & Tara continues proving that sustainability and memorable vacations go hand-in-hand.

There really is no excuse for a hotel in this day and age for not going carbon neutral/net zero and then continuing the journey to carbon negativity.

BOLD MOVES

While Bucuti & Tara has worked for 32 years towards a [mindful existence](#), it conscientiously pursued achieving carbon neutrality, also known as net zero and climate neutral, beginning eight years ago.

Before then and long before sustainability became mainstream, key steps carefully led the resort to a position to start making bold moves. Many of the resort's early initiatives have now become commonplace among hotels – think: the now popular #NoPlasticStraws, reusing towels and bedding, LED lighting and low flow water aerators.

Eleven years ago, Ewald Biemans was told carbon neutrality was impossible. Committing to defy this statement, Bucuti began researching and implanting initiatives that ultimately led it to carbon neutrality/net zero:

➤ **Energy Efficiency:**

- The entire resort converted from a chiller cooling system to a Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) cooling system. This aided in reducing electricity consumption as AC is the major contributing factor to electrical consumption on property.
- The Bucuti wing was retrofitted and the Tara wing was built to LEED standards ensuring buildings are as energy efficient as possible.
- Induction cook stoves are used in all resort kitchens. These reduce heat loss to the environment, translating to reduced energy consumption.
- All windows and glass walls on property are double paned, insulated with either air or film in the middle. This helps to reduce cooling needs in Bucuti & Tara's tropical climate near the equator.
- Every room is equipped with a door sensor that works in junction with the AC. This energy management system regulates energy consumption by increasing temperature when guests leave the room and limits temperature range while guests are in the room. This is yet another feature to reduce electrical consumption by AC.

➤ **Renewable energy.**

- On cosmopolitan Aruba, easy access to utilities makes it tempting to stay fossil-fuel dependent. In 2016, the resort installed a 618 photovoltaic solar panel, 173kW system, the largest on island in the private sector. The new system reduced the resort's outside energy demand by 15% and carbon emissions by 74.6 metric tons of CO₂e in its first year. The 15% of clean energy contributed by this system combined with the 25% from the island's windfarm and solar panels provide Bucuti & Tara with 45% renewable energy and not fossil fuel-generated energy.
- Implemented more than a decade ago, Bucuti & Tara also uses hot water collectors to heat water. Aruba's year-round clear, sunny skies is ideal for consistently generating clean energy via these solar-powered resources.
- In 2019, Bucuti added a complete line of SportsArt ECOPOWR® exercise equipment to its state-of-the-art Fitness Centre. The electricity-generating workout machines are powered by human endurance, converting calorie-burning exercises to kilowatts that are sent directly into the resort's power grid for consumption.

➤ **Major waste reduction.** Even as occupancy continues to grow to just under 100% year-round, Bucuti & Tara's waste stream to landfill has been reduced by 62%. Beyond basic reduce, reuse, recycle initiatives, bold moves include:

- Reducing entrée sizes to Healthy Portions by curtailing the average 30% consumer waste from plated meals. Most recently, Bucuti & Tara partnered with the World Wildlife Fund to further reduce its total food waste stream by 30%. Additionally, all left over food and food scraps are donated to a pig farmer as pig feed.
- The resort discontinued use of single-use plastics and Styrofoam in the 1980s, well ahead of the recent bans and pledges beginning to pop up in the news. Bucuti & Tara gifts every guest with a reusable keepsake canteen upon arrival. This initiative keeps more than 290,000 single-use plastic water bottles from Aruba's landfill.
- The resort reduces waste at the source by purchasing items in bulk rather than purchasing countless portion-controlled bottles. It also repurposes or donates linen and towels, instead of discarding them.
- Lastly, the resort recycles all materials possible including metal, glass, cardboard and kitchen oil. Besides recycling, Bucuti also sources local beer, for which the bottles and crates are returnable.

➤ **Reduced transportation:**

- Items are ordered and purchased in bulk, if not local they are sourced close by and are not seasonal. All deliveries are streamlined to further reduce unnecessary carbon emissions in the shipping and receiving process.
- Bucuti & Tara encourages ridesharing. Employees receive daily allowances for public transportation and those who carpool receive preferred parking slots

Tracking. Monitoring and measuring [every single initiative](#) – from employee transportation to work to the variable refrigerant flow cooling system – is the only way to verify Bucuti’s sustainability success. This is led by the resort’s full-time sustainability manager.



Culture. The scale of this achievement is all-encompassing. Sustainability is woven throughout Bucuti & Tara’s culture. All Bucuti associates including the Green Team and executives, together with contracted companies and [guests have participated](#) in the resort’s lifetime of sustainability efforts. Guests enjoy a laidback luxury vacation that is guiltfree thanks to Bucuti’s sustainability commitment.

Note, if vendors wish to do business with the popular hotel, they must commit to its sustainability practices.

Certifications. Using certifications as guidelines to best practices on its path to carbon neutrality, Bucuti is the most eco-certified Caribbean resort including: CarbonNeutral®, LEED Gold, Green Globe Platinum, ISO 14001, ISO 9001 and Travelife Gold. In October 2016, Green Globe certified Bucuti & Tara as the [“World’s Most Sustainable Hotel/Resort.”](#)

Community. Achieving carbon neutrality and now pursuing carbon negativity transcends the property line of the resort. Bucuti & Tara believes in sourcing products and talent locally. From the installation of the photovoltaic solar panel system to Aruba Aloe toiletries, to procuring invasive lionfish for the menu from local fishermen to Arubalife Organics coral reef-friendly sunscreen, and more is proudly made and serviced on island. Local artisans display their handmade creations for purchase and island musicians are always the featured entertainment.

MAJOR ECO CERTIFICATIONS



Bucuti believes steadfastly in giving back. It openly shares its best practices and helps lead seminars to island hospitality workers and management so they, too, can work toward offering a more sustainable travel experience. It is an active supporter of the Children’s home Imeldahof, which provides shelter and guidance to boys and girls (ages 6-12) who, due to circumstances, cannot live with their parents or caregivers. Bucuti is also an active partner of TurtugAruba, the local sea turtle protection foundation, which is part of WIDECAST; Donkey Sanctuary Aruba for sick and injured animals; and Animal Rights Aruba. In 2016, Bucuti took on Aruba’s issue of pet overpopulation by launching the successful Stimami, Sterilisami program (native Papiamentu for [Love me. Sterilize me.](#)) Since then, 15,000 island dogs and cats have been registered for the spay/neutering and microchipping program. Through the nonprofit, Bucuti & Tara covers the medical costs.

New in 2019, Bucuti & Tara introduced [Let’s Plant Aruba](#). The brainchild of Ewald Biemans, program founders kicked off the initiative of planting indigenous trees, including regional fruit trees throughout the island. Trees help against carbon dioxide output, provide shade, cool their surroundings and possibly bear fruit as Bucuti & Tara hopes to see as the first tree planted is a mango tree in the resort’s courtyard.

International Community. Throughout the greater Caribbean and internationally, Ewald Biemans is a sought-after speaker and panelist. His approach is to encourage and help other organizations take steps toward mitigating climate change. This April, Biemans was a featured presenter at the WTTC's prestigious 2019 Global Summit, which was headlined by former U.S. President Barack Obama in Seville, Spain. Next up, this May he heads to Belize to present at an environmental conservation conference for hotels and resorts located in Central America and South America. After that, Biemans and Bucuti's sustainability and certifications manager will each present at a UNESCO conference being held on Aruba.



Bucuti is a charter member of the Center for Responsible Tourism (CREST). In September 2017, Biemans was a panelist in the co-sponsored CREST/UN Environment Office – North America for its Forum for the UN's Year of Sustainable Tourism. He routinely speaks about sustainability at conferences for the Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association (CHTA) and Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO).

RECOGNITION

For Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort, success is creating a memorable vacation where guests are extremely satisfied while achieving minimal environmental impact. In its 32-year journey, under the inspirational leadership of Ewald Biemans, the resort has been able to do just that — exceed guest expectations while drastically reducing its carbon footprint to become an eco-pioneer and tourism leader in the Caribbean.

Bucuti's awards are showcased in the lobby so guests can see the resort's commitment to high standards of sustainability.

Below are the [awards, honors and certifications](#) recognizing Bucuti's commitment to the environment.

1997	CHA	Environmental Stewardship Award, small hotel category
1999	Green Globe	Commendation Award for Outstanding Achievement for Environmental Effort
Since 2000	Green Globe Certified	The first Green Globe 21 certified hotel in Aruba. Green Globe certification is a structured assessment of the sustainability performance of travel and tourism businesses and their supply chain partners.
2002	CHA	Achievement in Environmental Hotel Management Award
Since 2003	ISO 14001	The first property in the Americas to receive the certification, which is a series of environmental management standards developed and published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).
2003	CHA	Green Hotel of the Year
2004	International Hotel & Restaurant Association	Hotel of the Year for Innovation in Environmental Best Practices
2007	ISLANDS Magazine	Blue Award: Top 100 Global Sustainable Best Practices

2008	National Geographic Traveler Magazine	"Stay List"
Since 2011	Travelife Gold Certified	A European certification for hotels that meet sustainability criteria for social, economic and environmental impacts.
2011	Green Globe	High Achievement Award
2014	Caribbean Journal	Caribbean Travel Awards, Green Hotelier of the Year
Since 2015	LEED® Silver Certified	The only LEED® Silver certified property in the Caribbean
2015	Green Hotelier	Highly commended in Americas
2015	Travel Weekly	Magellan Award, Eco-friendly Hotel
2015	TripAdvisor	GreenLeaders Platinum Winner
2017	National Geographic Traveler / HSMAI Gold Adrian Award	Ewald Biemans: Leader in Sustainable Tourism Award
2017	CHTA – CHIEF Award	CHIEF Award for Environmental Sustainability
2018	Energy Globe Award	National Winner - Aruba
2018	CarbonNeutral®	August 28, 2018 Bucuti & Tara became the Caribbean's first certified climate neutral hotel/resort
2019	World Travel & Tourism Council	Bucuti & Tara named first-ever winner of Tourism for Tomorrow 2019 Climate Action Award
2019	Energy Globe Award	National Winner - Aruba
2020	Travel + Leisure Global Vision Award	Bucuti & Tara and Ewald Biemans honored by Editor-in-Chief Jacqui Gifford and the Travel + Leisure media outlet
2020	LEED Gold	Caribbean's first hotel to achieve LEED Gold under the most stringent protocols in LEED history, v4.1

A PLEA

Climate change is not "other peoples' problem," it is everyone's responsibility to fix. It is the biggest global issue among society. The enormity of the problem can make individual efforts seem miniscule. However, with everyone having the opportunity to make an impact, the change can be monumental, and it will need to be especially since everyone has contributed to it.

While global warming has had an increasing presence in the news, the world took notice with the October 2018 release of the United Nations' [Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C](#). Citing a 2030 deadline, the world has just 10 years to limit climate change catastrophe warns the UN. According to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which produced the report, urgent changes are needed to cut risk of extreme heat, drought, floods and poverty.

The good news: More people than ever are finally ready to listen and act.

It's never been easier to become sustainable. There are more resources readily available. The path is arduous, but can indeed be replicated. Bucuti & Tara welcomes all contacts to learn how to become more sustainable and carbon neutral/net zero.

NEXT UP

Early last year, as Bucuti & Tara was being evaluated onsite by Jamie Sweeting, President of the Planeterra Foundation, for the 2019 WTTC Climate Action Award, he remarked after visiting, "I was truly impressed by what I witnessed. Thank you! I have been doing this work in tourism and sustainability for over 25 years now and I rarely get impressed these days. Your attention to detail and utter commitment to pioneering innovation in this area, in spite of some major obstacles was really inspiring. I have been busy writing up my findings and trying to synthesize 18 pages of notes into a 3 page submission form!... In my view you are already a winner. I have made my case as to what a remarkable example you are to hoteliers all around the World - unfortunately the final decision is out of my hands. I only hope that my report provides an adequate picture of the fabulous work you are doing!"

Last April, Bucuti & Tara's owner and CEO Ewald Biemans, attended and presented at the World Travel & Tourism Council's 2019 Global Summit. The annual gathering includes heads-of-state, CEOs across industries and hospitality and tourism professionals. This year's keynote speaker was former U.S. President Barack Obama. Upon winning the prestigious organization's first-ever global Climate Action Award, Biemans vowed in his acceptance speech that Bucuti's "environmental journey just started, and we will continue working towards a better world."

True to his words, the resort's next goal is to be 100% paperless by the end of this year. The resort is already well on its way.

[See accompanying PowerPoint to view graphs, charts, eco-images and details on the complex, yet replicable, journey to carbon neutrality.](#)

Thank you for your time and consideration.