

GEO Certified® Independent Verification Report



Golf Facility: Aphrodite Hills Golf Club

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Executive Summary

The audit was conducted on May 29th 2019 as part of the initial certification procedure.

Aphrodite Hills Golf Club was represented by Mr. Andrew Darker - Director of Golf, Mr. Simon Douglas - Golf Course Superintendent, Ms Chryso Iasonos - Marketing & Business Development Executive and Mr. Zenon Papaloizou - Project Manager.

An environmental sustainability committee has been appointed with the objective of creating and defining an action plan for greater sustainability. The committee is composed of Mr. Andrew Darker - Director of Golf, Mr. Simon Douglas - Golf Course Superintendent, Ms Chryso Iasonos – Marketing and business development executive and Ms Raluca Parjol – Golf Operation Manager.

Aphrodite Hills has 38 permanent employees and 3 seasonal employees.

The facility is located in Cyprus, among the hills around the village of Koukليا, approximately 23 km north-east from the city of Paphos.

The surrounding area is covered by thrive olives and carobs. The largest part is covered with small shrubs. Generally there are no aquifers in the area and the dominant plant communities are two: Maquis and Garigue.

The climate is described as a typical Mediterranean. Dry and hot in the summer and mild and sometimes rainy in winter.

The course officially opened in 2002 and was designed by the architect, Cabell Robinson. The course has 18 holes and covers an area of approximately 6,300 m².

Aphrodite Hills Resort has recently been awarded the European Golf Resort of the Year 2018 and the European Golf Course of the Year 2018/2019.

The facility consists of the hotel, the clubhouse, the golf course and various supporting buildings. The Aphrodite Hills Hotel by Atlantica hotel has 290 rooms & suites.

Aphrodite Hills host the St. Paul's Lodge Golf Tournament. The St. Paul's Lodge is the oldest Lodge in Cyprus. It was consecrated on the 21st of November 1888 having been founded by British military personnel stationed in Cyprus.

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Nature



The management of the golf club is aware of the natural surroundings and biodiversity and has shown commitment to protecting it.

The flora of the area includes carob trees. These trees have been growing in the area for over 400 years. During the harvest period, the club assigns to external partners who have the relevant expertise to collect the carobs in order to be used in the production of various products such as pastries and syrups.

Apart from the carob trees, olive trees form a large part of the habitat that exists in the area. There are approximately 2000 olive trees throughout the resort grounds. The club has designated an area where new olive trees are planted and when they mature they are relocated or used as replacements to snugs. As a result the population of the olive trees increases contributing to the sustainability of the area.

A huge programme of transplanting trees has been undertaken to preserve those that would have been affected by the construction process. Having been cared for during construction within an on-site nursery, these trees are now being carefully re-introduced to their original landscape.

The club harvests the olives and produces its own olive oil products which are used mainly in the food service.

Until present no presence of any rare endemic, mammal, reptile, insect or bird has not been observed.

The kind of birds that fly in the area are mainly sparrows and partridges. The bird population is expected to grow as the current state-issued hunting permit over part of the site has been abolished. The abundant supply of golf course grass and pond water combined with extensive planting of new bushes and trees has resulted in more food and shelter for the local and migrating bird population including nightingales, kingfishers, kestrels, partridges, francolins and owls. Migrating swans have also been seen on the man-made irrigation lake.

All greens were rebuilt in 2017. A new drainage layer and back to back sprinklers have been installed along with a sand root zone.

The turfgrass selected is consisted of 007 creeping Bentgrass which adapts well for very low mowing on greens, as well as for reduced fungicide management on fairways and tees. The turfgrass has good heat tolerance and is ideal for greens, tees and fairways.

Is some green areas of the resort, thatch is removed from the ground leaving the necessary quantity that is needed for traffic tolerance. Thatch is removed because high thatch has a negative impact on the overall condition & health of the turf. Reduced thatch allows water to get into the soil profile rather than sitting in the thatch layer resulting in improved water efficiency and drought tolerance.

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The resort keeps records of the types and quantity of chemicals that are applied for various activities (e.g Nitrogen, Phosphorous, Potassium). The number of fungicide, insecticide and wetting agents applied is also recorded.

The fertilizers are stored in a storage area, isolated from other products or chemicals. The main goal is to use eco-friendly fertilizers and pesticides.

Aphrodite Hills has designated no-spray areas which are limited to 1 meter from the top of the lake bank near holes 10 and 18.

The technical team performs daily preventive checks to the biological treatment facility and the gas station. During the checks the energy consumption is recorded.

The gas station which provides fuel to the resort's vehicle and machinery is maintained annually by Petrolina.

The club stores pesticides in a closed storage area. The products are organised in such way that powder products are stored above the liquid products. The storage racks are divided to sections and herbicide, fungicide, insecticide and other pesticides separately, so that can be easily found and identified.

Chemical analysis of lake water is periodically performed by an accredited laboratory. The results have shown that the negative substances are below acceptable limits.

Resources

The lake containing irrigation water for the golf course is located near hole 10. Water from the Asprokremmos dam and the STP plant is pumped out of this lake and then into the golf course through the golf course irrigation pumps. The lake features an Otterbine lake aerator to keep the water circulating and an Ultra Sonic algae control system from LG.

Aphrodite Hills Resort monitors water consumption annually and records consumption per quarter.

The sprinklers around the greens were upgraded during the green's renovation between June 2017 and December 2017. Originally there was just one sprinkler (average of 4 per green) working as a full circle, meaning you had to water the greens & surrounds even if you only wanted to water the green. Knowing the greens would need more water than the surrounds this led to wet areas and a lot of wasted water. The resort upgraded the sprinklers to back to back part circle sprinklers giving greater control of water. This upgrade allowed the club to be more efficient with water around the greens and targeting the correct areas with the correct sprinkler run times.

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Accredited laboratories conduct a chemical analysis of the liquid sewage to determine if the substances are within acceptable limits.

The resort uses soil moisture meters to determine how much water to apply to the turf on the golf course which leads to water saving.

The clubhouse has been reconstructed and modernized in order to become more environmentally friendly.

LED lighting has replaced the previous halogen lighting, resulting in the reduction of electricity use.

A procedure has been published towards energy saving which applies to all personnel. The instructions within the procedure include switching off the computers and lights when not working and turning off the air-conditioning.

The resort has posted signs to various areas of the establishment to remind personnel of energy-saving actions such as turning off computers at the end of work, closing doors and windows when air-conditioning is on and turning off the lights when leaving an area.

Electric cars are used for moving around the golf course and various areas of the hotel. The club also offers the opportunity to its clients to rent bikes in order to circulate around the facilities.

Monthly records of the temperatures of cold storage are kept.

Fuel consumption is calculated and recorded monthly. A significant increase of fuel consumption has been noted in August 2018 compared to the other months of the year.

Aphrodite Hills has invested in hybrid greens mowers as they perform well whilst reducing the amount of petrol used leading to reduced energy consumption.

Aphrodite Hills uses separate dumpsters to collect paper, glass and plastics. The materials are collected and recycled by licensed contractors. Every area of the hotel has separate waste bins for different material collections. The waste bins have clear indications about the types of materials to be placed (e.g. glass, paper, plastic).

The resort is handling green waste in a proper manner. The grass clippings are not collected when cutting the fairways and rough because they return nutrients to the soil as they decompose. If there is a lot of grass clipping on the fairways and rough, it is dispersed appropriately.

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Community



Aphrodite Hills has been actively encouraging the involvement of staff and stakeholders towards the protection and sustainability of the environment.

The club encourages golfers to volunteer on tournaments, committees and projects and also encourages staff and members to represent the facility in local community groups and projects

Various festivals are organized from time to time such as Jazz and Rock music festivals

In the first week of May 2019 a tennis tournament took place for children under 12 years old.

The resort collects on a daily basis hundreds of bottle caps with the aim of giving them to a local charity and turn them into wheelchairs for people with disabilities. Guests, visitors and personnel are encouraged to place the bottle caps in special baskets, spreading by this was the awareness about recycling benefits and demonstrating that taking a few minutes to collect plastic waste and place it to recycling centers can make a big difference. The cap movement began a few years ago at Aphrodite Hills and since then thousands of bottle caps have been collected for a good cause.

Charity events are also included to the resort's activities. The latest event that took place was the so called Captain's choice, a charity for a Cancer Support Group. The Captain's Charity Event has raised the amount of €10.000 helping a great cause which sensitizes each one of us. During the day the golf team has organized a golf tournament where Members and their guests donated their time to get together to compete for prizes donated by the club and others and the golf professionals gave their time to organize the 'Beat the Pro Challenge' on one of Par 3s in order to raise more money for the charity. The funds were raised through entrance fees, auctions, beat the pro challenge and from raffle tickets.

Conclusion

I, Ourania Lasda, independent accredited verifier, recommend the Aphrodite Hills Golf Club to be awarded the GEO Certified® ecolabel. The club has fulfilled the basic requirements of the GEO standard and have worked to achieve their sustainability goals.

A strong effort has been put in terms of environmental sustainability and protection.

The management has shown a strong commitment to protecting the ecosystem by developing an action plan for further improving environmental sustainability.

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The top management has shown closely cooperate with local authorities, in order to improve water management, waste management and cultural activities.

Pollution control and energy management have been prioritized and more measures and controls will be applied.

The Aphrodite Hills Golf Club has committed to minimizing the impact of their operations on the environment. They comply with environmental policy and establish several environmental programs, all actions aim to protect the environment through the continuous improvement of their environmental performance.

Observations and Opportunities for Improvement, as described below:

- The roles and responsibilities of the employees should include environmental issues
- Better internal communication about sustainable issues should be established
- Habitants and archaeological issues could be gathered and communicated internally and externally.
- All the control measures reported in the health and safety study should be monitored regularly and records should be kept.
- The risk assessment should include all hazardous substances.
- A training for all employees involved should be performed with main subjects sustainability and environmental protection
- The personnel involved in waste management should be more aware of waste streams and waste management operations
- The Laboratory's report of waste water analysis should include the acceptability limits for harmful substances.
- A biological treatment sampling program should be established
- The biodiversity survey should be updated
- The hotel should keep records of the licenses and certifications of its critical suppliers.

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- The energy consumption for all forms of energy used should be recorded and all necessary actions should be taken according to the results
- The waste consumption for all type of waste should be recorded annually and all necessary actions should be taken according to the results
- Maintenance preventive plan could be updated with the realization dates and the maintenance records should be archived in a better way.
- The legislation should be monitored regularly for changes and actions towards compliance should be recorded.
- The action/management plans for habitat & wild life conservation project should be updated in order to better reflect the current situation.
- Seawater quality analysis should be performed
- A documented and controlled procedure/ policy should be established in order to use only approved suppliers and only legal approved material.
- The First aid Box should be checked regularly for its repleteness
- The Golf course should establish a procedure to monitor and control all measures of minimization of environmental aspects that have been described in the environmental study.