

National Historical Landmark Hotel and Restaurant Go Solar: The Mad Batter/Carroll Villa Bring Eco Tourism to the Jersey Shore

In an unprecedented decision, the Historic Preservation Committee of Cape May, NJ, approved solar panel installation on the 1882 architectural landmark building, which houses the Mad Batter Restaurant and Bar/Carroll Villa Hotel. Situated adjacent to the Atlantic Ocean in the country's oldest seaside resort, the project is the first to bring eco-tourism to the Jersey Shore, and merges environmentally sustainability and historic charm.

CAPE MAY, NJ -- April 30, 2010 -- Last month, with the symbolic flip of a switch, The Mad Batter Restaurant and Bar/Carroll Villa Hotel in Cape May, NJ, became the first sustainable National Historic Landmark tourism destination on the Jersey Shore, and a leader for eco tourism in the country. The installation of 38 solar panels to the roof of the 1882 Victorian establishment is consistent with the proprietors' longstanding commitment to "go green." According to Mark Kulkowitz, who has owned and operated the dual businesses with his wife Pam Huber since 1976, "we want to do our part in reducing our carbon footprint, and solar seemed like a good way to walk the walk."



Architectural and historic preservation a priority

Years in the planning, this project was ultimately made possible after a precedent-setting decision by the Historic Preservation Committee of Cape May, which voted to allow the installation on a designated architectural treasure in the center of Cape May's National Historic Landmark (NHL) District. Known for its Victorian Gingerbread homes, the town has been a popular vacation destination since the mid 1700s, and is recognized by the United States government as the



country's oldest seaside resort. Cape May is noted to host the nation's second largest collection of Victorian homes, following San Francisco. In 1976, the entire city of Cape May was officially assigned NHL status, which was intended to ensure the architectural preservation of these buildings.

10,293 KWH/year -- like planting an acre of trees

The panels, which were installed by Mercury Solar Systems under the direction of Harley Shuler, provide 10,293 KWH in electrical production per year.

Approximately 7,987 lbs of CO₂ will be offset annually, which is equivalent to recycling 165,361 cans of soda, not burning 962 gallons of gasoline, and planting 1 acre of trees. Jared Haines, President, Mercury Solar Systems, commented, "New Jersey has some of the best incentives in the country to go solar, including SREC's which can be sold back to the utility creating a steady stream of income for your business each year."

Renew, Reuse, Recycle

In the past few years, as part of a major renovation process, Kulkowitz and Huber have implemented other environmentally friendly elements into the operations and décor of the restaurant and hotel. In addition to an industrial dishwasher that saves 100,000 gallons of water a year, Energy Star light bulbs throughout the facility, energy efficient shower heads in all guest rooms, the use of "smart" candles to light the dining room and non-linen tabletops, the use of natural materials abound. "We try to select earth-friendly, fair trade products whenever possible, and feel good about making choices that support our overall commitment to the planet," said Huber. Renewable bamboo and corn floor coverings are an example, as is the unique bar countertop made from recycled glass tiles and shell. Instead of commercial paint, which contains volatile organic chemicals (VOCs), Earthy American clay was used to cover the ceilings. The

guest rooms are furnished with antique furniture and collectibles, which supports the business' reuse, renew and recycle efforts. Additionally, the staff makes an effort to enlist and educate guests in these efforts, and to spread the message that green is not only the future, but the present.



“Even though going green is not always as cost efficient as other methods, we stand behind our decisions, and hope to set an example for our fellow hospitality businesses on the Jersey Shore and around the country,” explained Kulkowitz. “We credit the Historic Preservation Committee of Cape May for their willingness to support our efforts to merge our causes and preserve both the town’s rich Victorian architecture as well as the environment. After all, the built landscape is only as healthy as the planet it sits on.”

Kudos also go to Hugh McCauley, who along with others led the movement to achieve the landmark historic status for Cape May in 1976. # # #

About the Mad Batter & Carroll Villa Hotel

Built in 1882 as a seaside escape for families, the Carroll Villa was built in the Italian villa or American bracketed villa style. The Carroll Villa was on the cover of the Cape May handbook as an architectural example of this style, which presents an imposing, sweeping porch, tall front windows, a symmetrical facade, and often a cupola, as does the Carroll Villa.

The history of the Carroll Villa shows that about a decade later, a second section was added to the main building. These new rooms were very small, leading one to the conclusion that they were built as servant quarters for the families occupying the main building. As was true of the seaside villas of the Victorian era, the rooms of the Carroll Villa were spare and austere. When bathrooms were added, they were "down the hall," two to a floor. There was a common parlor for socializing and a large dining room for meals.

When the present owners, the Kulkowitz family, purchased the Carroll Villa in 1978, there were 31 rooms and 8 bathrooms. Each room had an odd combination of a beautiful antique dresser and a rather worn out iron bedstead. Rooms were painted in dark colors. There were many connecting doors between the rooms. It was obvious that a restoration project had to begin. As became true with all restoration projects in Cape May, that of the Carroll Villa came to reflect the personalities and histories of the members of the Kulkowitz family.