

Property developer Iqbal Latif and architectural designers Latis collaborate with Philips on an environmentally conscious five-star hotel to create what they hope will become a blueprint for the future.

Rafayel on the Left Bank *London*

Words: Catherine Martin Photography: Courtesy of Rafayel on the Left Bank

At a time when being 'green' is high on the agenda of the design world, labelling yourself "London's first eco-luxury hotel" is bound to attract some attention. It is a rather bold claim, after all. But this is no marketing ploy, as Iqbal Latif, the mastermind behind Rafayel on the Left Bank is keen to show.

On a tour of the recently-opened property, located on the south bank of the Thames, Latif explained the concept of the hotel and some of the practices he has employed in order to achieve this eco-luxury model. His ultimate aim is to slash the average hotel guest's carbon footprint of 70kg per night, to just 17kg. All the while providing the five-star luxury guests have come to expect. "The guest really wants to be energy conscious," says Latif. "But when it comes down to any compromise, that's a very tall order."

Whilst some of the energy saving systems are groundbreaking, others are so straightforward it begs the question as to why more hoteliers are not embracing them. Rafayel has a paperless policy; there is no printed literature in sight and guests are offered electronic reading matter rather than hard copy. There is a ban on plastic water bottles; chilled drinking water is instead provided through mains-fed ►