

Press Release

Villages Nature® Paris goes from strength to strength. Following its grand opening on the 10th October, the resort has been chosen by the Guardian as one of the ten best no-fly holidays from the UK

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Bioregional helps celebrate Villages Nature Paris launch

One of the world's biggest and boldest sustainable tourism projects has officially opened. Bioregional's One Planet Living framework has played a leading role in enabling Villages Nature® Paris to achieve its high ambitions for being in harmony with nature and the planet.

Bioregional first became involved with this family oriented resort sited three miles from Disneyland Paris back in 2005, during the early planning stages. It has supported it ever since, regularly surveying its progress against the challenging targets set out in Villages Nature® Paris' own One Planet Action Plan. Bioregional will continue to monitor the sustainability of the resort now that it has opened to the public, with plans to eventually attract more than a million visitors a year.

The project, a joint venture of Groupe Pierre & Vacances-Center Parcs and Euro Disney SCA, now offers 868 cottages and apartments set in a car-free landscape of lakes, woodlands, meadows and gardens 20 miles from the heart of the French capital.

Bioregional's Chief Executive and co-founder Sue Riddlestone OBE, who is attending the launch event, said: *"Tourism is a major global industry with massive environmental impacts. But Villages Nature® Paris is setting new standards and demonstrating how this fast-growing industry can be a force for good, reconnecting people to nature, radically reducing environmental impacts and strongly supporting the local economy."*

Bioregional co-founder Pooran Desai OBE, who has worked with the Villages Nature® Paris team for 12 years, said: *"The Villages Nature team were inspired by the clarity of the One Planet Living vision. To their credit, they had the foresight to predict the importance of the environmental agenda and have stuck with the original vision. The result is a pure joy. It will be a gamechanger."*

Marie Balmain, head of corporate social responsibility at Groupe Pierre & Vacances Center Parcs, said: *"Since the inception of the project, Bioregional's One Planet Living framework has helped us consider not only environmental performance but also all the economic and social benefits Villages Nature® Paris can bring to local communities and its stakeholders. Now that we've opened our doors, we continue to strive to deliver an inspiring visitor experience that creates a positive vision of the future. Our Sustainable Action Plan is now being taken on board by our operations team."*

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The One Planet Framework, based on ten easy-to-grasp One Planet Principles, has been used in projects large and small all over the world, from individual homes and small organisations to major retailers such as B&Q and giant infrastructure projects. It provides a simple way to plan, deliver and communicate sustainable development, so that projects and organisations support local communities and promote healthy, happy lives while respecting the planet’s natural limits.

At the heart of Villages Nature® Paris is a gigantic swimming and water play complex, the Aqualagon, with water indoors and outdoors heated year-round to 30° C by a carbon-free, geothermal heat source. This source, more than one mile deep, provides the heating and hot water for the entire project.

Other sustainability features of this €500 million project include:

- Major works to create habitat and enhance biodiversity on site - planting 28,800 trees and 430,000 other plants including 2.5 miles of lake banks planted with natural vegetation. Many of the buildings have extensive green walls and roofs.
- Less than 10% of the entire 259 hectare area, formerly low-biodiversity, intensively cultivated farmland, is being built on.
- More than 600 jobs created including 75% from Seine et Marne, plus a further 1,600 jobs supported in the local area.
- Extensive use of timber, a carbon-storing material, in the visitor accommodation and the Aqualagon, with all of the timber used in construction coming from certified managed forests in Europe. The Aqualagon also used low-carbon concrete.
- Villages Nature® Paris has a frequent bus service to the nearby Marne-la-Vallée railway station, served by high speed trains across France and beyond and by Paris’ own RER suburban network. So visitors can easily travel from hundreds of miles away by public transport, and also use it to visit the French capital. The resort has plans for a large share of its visitors to travel without using their cars.

Construction of a further 215 homes will begin soon, and eventually the project could expand to provide 2,450 homes.

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Note to editors:

Bioregional is a charity and social enterprise which works with partners to create better places for people to live, work and do business. www.bioregional.com

What is One Planet Living?

If all people lived like the average European, we would need three planets’ worth of resources to support us. The solution is the corollary: a world in which people everywhere can lead happy, healthy lives within the means of our one planet, leaving space for wildlife and wilderness.

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healthy lives within the means of our one planet, leaving space for wildlife and wilderness.

Bioregional's One Planet Living framework comprises ten simple principles, backed up by a series of sustainability goals and guidance on how to implement them.

The One Planet Principles are:

- Health and happiness
- Equity and local economy
- Culture and community
- Land and nature
- Sustainable water
- Local and sustainable food
- Travel and transport
- Sustainable products and materials
- Zero waste
- Zero carbon energy