AMBER'S SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

AMBER
RICHARD EKKEBUS

MANDARIN ORIENTAL
THE LANDMARK HONG KONG

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Sustainability and social responsibility are buzzwords used by businesses of all sizes and in all industries these days, often without much concrete action. However, sustainability has been a central tenet at Amber at Mandarin Oriental The Landmark, Hong Kong since it opened 20 years ago, with Director of Culinary and Restaurants, Bars & Experiences, Richard Ekkebus as the driving force, through the implementation of intelligent, impactful, and responsible actions. At Amber, we are focused on minimising harm to our planet, on environmental, social, and governance performance, in which Amber has a social, material and environmental impact.

Amber's culinary language is one of innovation, intention and indulgence — a reflection of our three Michelin Stars and Green Star. Under the guidance of Chef Richard Ekkebus, we blend the precision of classical French foundations with the vibrancy of Hong Kong and the region.

Chef Ekkebus' leadership extends far beyond the kitchen, regularly shaping global conversations through roundtables and workshops that advance sustainable gastronomy. The 2019 relaunch crystallized this vision in Amber's manifesto, transforming thoughtful practices into enduring principles that continue to guide each culinary creation. At Amber, sustainability has never been about appearances – it's the quiet confidence of knowing true excellence cannot exist without responsibility.

The Hotel was also recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council for its ongoing commitment to minimising environmental impact. The assessment is known as the GSTC Criteria, this global standard for sustainable travel and tourism by GSTC provides the industry with comprehensive criteria to operate and flourish in a sustainable manner.

Upon the relaunch of Amber in 2019, Richard crystalised these actions and values in our manifesto. The manifesto contains the key elements that underpin our culinary philosophy and approach.

MICHELIN GUIDE
2026

In addition, the Hotel was assessed in 2023 by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council® (GSTC). The assessment is known as the GSTC Criteria, this global standard for sustainable travel and tourism by GSTC provides the industry with comprehensive criteria to operate and flourish in a sustainable manner. As the results of a worldwide effort to develop a common language about sustainability in tourism, the yardsticks could also be further divided into four pillars namely:

1. Sustainable management
2. Socioeconomic impacts
3. Cultural impacts
4. Environmental impacts

All these criteria are designed and adapted to local conditions for seamless localization. In 2023, the Hotel successfully received the GSTC Certification to recognize our commitment for a better future.

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Come with us as we embark on a journey to discover dedicated growers and fishers, whose produce is harvested at their peak, and flavours are coaxed with reverence and artistry.

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Amber: A Manifesto

The key elements that underpin our culinary philosophy and approach are:

PASSION

We share a commitment to drive culinary exploration and creativity

PROGRESSIVE

A pioneering spirit with innovation at its core, yet respect for tradition

PROVENANCE

The very best natural, nourishing, and traceable ingredients sourced with integrity

CONSCIENCE

We explore solutions to minimise waste, reduce the use of single-use plastics, and limit our carbon footprint.

MASTERY

Sophisticated, masterful techniques, expertise, and care in all we do

TRANSFORMATIVE

To create an experience that engages and impacts all the senses

COLLABORATIVE

Respect for our guests and colleagues

Our sustainability efforts include, but are not limited to:

Society

Internal / Within Amber:

Amber prides itself as an employer that goes above and beyond for its team members. At Amber, we firmly believe that our colleagues are our internal guests, and we ensure that they feel well taken care of. Our colleague development is a key topic, ensuring everyone has learning and development opportunities to grow and develop their full potential. We encourage paid volunteering hours, ensure the continuous enhancement quality colleague experiences, and apply innovative bonus schemes. This also means going beyond the mandatory Hong Kong employee recognition and minimum wage. These are all part of the mix that will help Subsequently, these will ensure that guest experiences will be at the highest possible level.

Please find below a comprehensive list of our internal efforts to contribute to a sustainable staff environment and development:

Recognise good performance: Across teams in Amber, there is a rewards structure in place that recognises excellent colleague performance. Rewards are tied to relevant goals – for example, receiving positive guest feedback and comments are tied to monetary rewards. Recognising and rewarding performance is an integral part of the Amber DNA, with townhall meetings conducted monthly and quarterly to recognise outstanding performers.

Colleague development: At Amber, we have a well-defined learning and development plan for each individual colleague, and a clearly defined system of performance evaluation. Training includes HACCP & food safety, corporate office-driven programs, “A Silver Lining” learning initiative by Jardines, cross-departmental training exposure via a program called “Team Titans”, and many more.

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Healthy diet for colleague meals, including green Mondays: The hotel's canteen offers additional vegetarian options every Monday to encourage healthy eating. This is not only to reduce the amount of animal proteins that are linked to problems such as greenhouse gases and water wastage, but also to raise awareness and educate colleagues about the impacts on the environment. This allows us to offer high-quality and ethically sourced animal proteins on other days.

Birthday leave: All colleagues have an additional day off because of their birthday that can be taken within one month.

Equal pay: All our colleagues receive pay above the required HK minimum wage, and all genders are equally recognized.

Aim for an equitable gender balance: In January 2025 our Male to Female ratio is 57% to 43% and our aim is to work constantly towards a 50/50 balance.

Health Insurance for all colleagues: All our colleagues are insured via Mandarin Oriental, The Landmark Hong Kong, which is not mandatory by law in Hong Kong and not a common practice in restaurants across the city.

Each colleague has a contract: All colleagues employed by Mandarin Oriental, The Landmark Hong Kong, have signed a valid full-time work contract which is mandatory in Hong Kong by law.

Tips are equally shared amongst team members: Every team member has an equal percentage of the overall cash & credit card tips, which is not based on rank or performance.

Free uniforms: Uniforms and laundry services are provided free of charge to all colleagues.

Recreational allowance: Annually, the Hotel's Human Resources Department supports team culture and bonding by offering a recreational allowance to each colleague, enabling departments to organise activities outside of work environment to foster understanding and better mental health. The Hotel's Human Resources Department also offers a range of team building activities, yoga classes, and a celebration fund to enhance the enjoyment of gatherings beyond the premises.

Option to choose rest day within the week: Days off can be requested and are given whenever possible.

Sustainability training to all colleagues: As sustainability is central to Amber's identity, we want to ensure that our colleagues are trained to understand what impact our daily actions have on the environment. We ensure that our colleagues are making conscious and informed decisions towards a greener future, and will be able to apply the knowledge in their daily lives, not just at work. We have annual general sustainability training, as well as introductory training during the onboarding procedure, and raise more awareness through initiatives throughout the year. Sustainability-related information is present in all colleagues' areas.

External / Within the community:

To restore or refresh – that is the definition of the French word 'restaurant'. The very nature of hospitality is to bring people together through fabulous food. Kitchens that are connected to their communities are places that have loyal customers, loyal team members and some of the tastiest food. It's a recipe for a sustainable and successful business. Nine out of ten consumers remain loyal to socially responsible businesses. The best businesses in this area are building long-lasting partnerships with local community groups and charities, and have a named individual responsible for managing these relationships.

Additional to our internal efforts, Amber is an active member of the community. We continuously contribute to local and international charities, not only through monetary contributions, but also by donating colleagues' time and skill sets. We recognise our privileged position in the market, and have made it one of our key missions to give back when and where we can.

Support local and international charities: We always seek opportunities to raise awareness and funds for causes close to our hearts, such as Feeding Hong Kong, More Good, Food Angel, MINDSET, Movember, Ren, Baan Nokkamin Orphanage, World Ocean Day and A Plastic Ocean Foundation.

Social inclusion: We work closely with MINDSET, Shining Star, and Hong Chi Association, offering re-integration and development opportunities to their service users. We aim to equip them with new skill sets and to ultimately offer them job opportunities within Amber.

Provide community service: We volunteer with NGOs such as Food Angel and Soap Cycling. We have distributed hygiene and PPE kits to street cleaners in Hong Kong in partnership with Soap Cycling, and have organised Colleague Wellness activities such as hiking, running, and wellness activities within the Spa infrastructure.

Support local artists: All art displayed in Amber, as well as the menu design come from local artists within the community. Ruth Chao was commissioned for corporate identity, collateral and menu design, Gail Keaton for the exclusive Amber sculptures, and Ting Fung for Amber's kitchen graffiti.

Frequent guest speaker on sustainability-related issues: Being a sustainability advocate, Richard Ekkebus is frequently invited to speak about sustainability and to be on discussion panels hosted by institutions such as ICI VTC Pokfulam Complex, ReThink, Future Green, WWF, G.R.E.E.N. Hospitality, and so on.

Participating in research and development on sustainability: Amber has been participating in research and development to further sustainable practices within the hospitality industry, collaborating with various institutions such as G.R.E.E.N. Hospitality to study food waste and packaging waste in hospitality. Together with the School of Energy and Environment in City University of Hong Kong, we have participated in research on sustainable kitchens and their energy and water performance.

Plant trees for vegetarian menus: To promote plant-based eating and give back to the community, Amber has launched an initiative with The Green Earth, a local Hong Kong NGO. For every Vegetarian menu sold in Amber, proceeds will go to the NGO's plantation enrichment programme, which focuses on restoring Hong Kong's native biodiversity.

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Sourcing

Sourcing is a topic that we at Amber, led by chef Richard Ekkebus, have long been passionate about. The sustainable, organic, and local sourcing of ingredients is one of the key initiatives that sets Amber apart from most of the fine dining restaurants in Asia. Amber is one of the very few restaurants in the region that has such an extensive and comprehensive sourcing programme to ensure the use of fully traceable, local and regional, organic and sustainable produce wherever possible.

Sustainable seafood: All fish and seafood used at Amber are sourced sustainably. Currently, all our seafood is sourced through suppliers who deliver seafood harvested using sustainable techniques such as line fishing, hand diving, and other methods with no negative impact on the environment. In addition, we respect the sustainable fishing calendar whereby we only purchase fish when they are not carrying eggs. Also, certain species that reproduce later in their lifetime, and are therefore quite vulnerable to overfishing, are not featured on our menus. We manage our menus utilising the following resources: Australia Seafood Guide, Good Fish Guide by the Marine Conservation Society for European seafood, and the WWF Seafood guide for local and regional sourcing. We are members and work very closely with Hong Kong's Sustainable Seafood Coalition, which promotes sustainable seafood initiatives and the preservation of different species.

We support biodiversity: Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth – the number of different species of plants, animals, and microorganisms from Earth's vastly different ecosystems, from deserts, rainforests, coral reefs, grasslands, tundra, to polar ice caps. Biodiversity is essential to the well-being of the planet. As a result, we love to feature lesser-known seafood, ethical-sourced heritage meats and poultry, heirloom plants, roots and fruits.

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Only source fair trade agricultural commodities: chocolate, vanilla, coffee, sugar and tea: We exclusively use ethical and responsible agricultural commodities, certified by Rainforest Alliance, Fair Trade and others. The hotel is diligently working towards the objective of sourcing fair-trade sugar by the conclusion of the current year.

Organic KIN eggs: In our continuous efforts to progress ethical sourcing, Mandarin Oriental, The Landmark Hong Kong uses only organic KIN Eggs in Amber. KIN Eggs are exclusively produced at a family-owned sustainable farm located in the pristine mountainous region of Yunnan with a closed-cycle supply chain – chickens are fed by organic corn grown on the farm while utilizing their waste as soil fertilizer.

Ethically sourced animal protein: All our ingredients are thoroughly scrutinised before being featured on Amber's menu. We care that all our animal proteins are ethically raised, antibiotic- and growth hormone-free, and where appropriate, grass-fed, free roaming, or organic, sustainably sourced, and raised by people who share our values about sustainability.

Prioritise sourcing organic, local, and regional to reduce carbon footprint: We predominantly work with organic farms from Hong Kong's New Territories, including fruit, vegetable, pig and poultry farms. Buying from local producers gives us access to seasonal, fresh food with a smaller carbon price tag. It is also a valuable investment into the local economy, helps to establish thriving food networks and protects Hong Kong's food heritage. Where we cannot source local, most of the time, we source regionally, in particular from organic farms in Southern China, Taiwan and Kyushu (Japan) and, only when even those are not possible, organic from Australia and Europe.

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ENVIRONMENT

The third pillar of our sustainability efforts is environment. We believe that operating in a sustainable way and leading by example across waste management, energy management and resource management is crucial in order to bring upon lasting change in the hospitality industry. All our waste and resource output are closely monitored and measured to ensure that we constantly operate in the most efficient way possible.

Completely eliminate dairy products: In order to significant reduce the carbon footprint of milk production, transportation, and storage from our supply chain, Amber's menu does not feature any dairy products. This also enables us to further shift the plant-based to animal protein ratio. It has also resulted in a lighter, and more holistic dining experience.

We favour plant-based options: Food accounts for 25-30% of greenhouse gas emissions, while livestock production alone accounts for 15% of all greenhouse gas emissions. Making our menu less meat-centric reduces our overall environmental impact and resonates with the growing number of diners who believe that a good meal doesn't require meat. We define vegetable-led dishes as those that emphasise and celebrate vegetarian ingredients. This would include, but is not limited to: fruit and vegetables, whole grains, beans, pulses, soy or other protein alternatives, nuts and seeds, plant oils, and so on. At Amber, we aim constantly to have a 35:65 ratio between animal protein and plant-based ingredients in our menus.

SUP free operations: Reducing single use plastic (SUP) output across all waste streams is our number one objective. Over the past six years, we have diligently operated towards a fully SUP-free operation by closely working with manufacturers to develop plant-based alternatives for commonly used cling film, vacuum pouches and bin liners. Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group has followed our best practices and has listed a minimum of 60 SUP items to be eliminated by March 2021.

Waste prevention: We consider waste prevention to be even more important than waste management, especially in a city like Hong Kong where waste management and recycling infrastructure can be difficult and unsatisfactory. We believe that waste prevention is crucial. Therefore, we closely monitor, analyse, and examine our operations on a regular basis, to understand where and how we can further reduce our waste. Waste output is recorded daily and consolidated monthly, and analysed. An action plan is then derived in order to reduce input for the subsequent month. The data is openly shared with all colleagues to raise awareness and further facilitate reduction. The anaerobic waste digester in Amber's kitchen is another key initiative – in 2024, we diverted an average of 31.98% of our total waste from the landfill. We are actively engaged in the formal practice of diverting coffee grounds and eggshells to a local farm, with the purpose of enriching the soil through their utilization.

Oil recycling: Since June 2011, we recycle all cooking oil and currently we work closely with Gammon Biofuel, a waste oil recycling company, and fully-licensed biodiesel manufacturer in Hong Kong. Their key focus is to transform cooking oil into a renewable energy for local use. In our hotel on average of 200kg of oil per month is diverted.

Waste segregation for recycling: We separate our waste into metal, plastic, styrofoam, food waste, glass, paper and carton, oil, and electronics. We recycle wherever possible. All staff are thoroughly trained on waste prevention and waste segregation.

Manage natural resources: Energy and water consumption are recorded in a monthly basis, and analysed. An action plan is then derived to reduce usage for the subsequent month. The data is openly shared with all colleagues to raise awareness and further facilitate reduction. We also exclusively use LED lights at Amber's front-of-house and heart-of-house spaces, for further reduction in energy consumption.

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Paper products: At Amber, we are strongly committed to recycling, all our paper products such as menus (non-laminated), shopping bags, collateral, paper napkins, paper straws and tissue are all FSC-certified, recycled and recyclable.

No linen: When Amber reopened in May 2019, we made a conscious decision to remove tablecloths from the restaurant layout. This is not a cosmetic change, but was made in order to reduce the environmental impact of industrial washing, which uses bleach. We chose to use napkins of natural colours as opposed to white for the same reason.

In-house water bottling for colleagues and guests: Since 2018, we have used the Nordaq FRESH water filtration and bottling system from Sweden in both front- and heart-of-house, thereby completely eliminating plastic bottles, as well as imported bottled water. This not only reduces SUP usage, but also significantly reduces the carbon footprint associated with importing bottled water. Water fountains are also used by colleagues to help further minimise SUP bottle usage. In 2020 alone, we saved 57,212 plastic bottles from landfills, equivalent to 7,095kg of plastic waste.

Biodegradable cleaning products: We only use cleaning products that are certified biodegradable and do not harm the environment.

Eliminate Chemical Cleaning Products: In 2022, we pledge to eliminate chemical cleaning products by deploying the natural sanitation and disinfection solutions by Biotek Ozone – a modern, safe and effective technology for sanitizing all fresh vegetables, fruits and eggs in our kitchen operations. Furthermore, only 100% chemical-free and certified biodegradable cleaning products of Zero Impact are used for day-to-day cleaning tasks. The used bottles are collected and recycled for the new batch of production. We carefully selected hand sanitizers from Safe+Sound, which are vegan-friendly, alcohol-free and made from biodegradable lactic acid. Their newly created, circular refill system helps us eliminate single-use plastic bottles.

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Our Sustainability Related Awards:

2022-Present | Michelin Green Star - Sustainable Gastronomy with commendable environmental practices

2025 | SCMP 100 Top Tables - Sustainability Hero for Richard Ekkebus at Amber

2023 | Green & CSR Hotelier of the Year for Richard Ekkebus by Stelliers

2023 | GSTC - Global Sustainable Tourism Council Certification

2022 | Distinguished Sustainability leadership award for Mr Richard Ekkebus by the Hong Kong Management Association

2022 | We're Smart Green Guide Sustainability Listing

2020 | Asia's 50 Best Sustainable Award – Most Sustainable Restaurant

2020 | A Foodie World – The Foodie Forks - Sustainability Award