

Solar power rising in southern African hotel industry

By [Vanessa Rogers](#)

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Members of the southern African hospitality industry are rapidly joining the green revolution and its not for show or Google ranking - there are savings to be had and natural vistas to preserve.

In Namibia's capital city of Windhoek, Arebbusch Travel Lodge already rises head and shoulders above its competitors in terms of setting - just because an accommodation establishment is city-based, doesn't mean it can't be surrounded by indigenous flora and abundant birdlife.

Yet, the lodge's most notable green feature these days, which is located between the acacia trees and camping facilities, is the new 204kWp solar-powered installation. Consisting of 640 photovoltaic panels, the installation has been mounted on a horizontal weighting system that continuously tracks the sun – a first in Namibia.



Arebbusch solar power. Image: Republikein

To date, John Williams, manager of the lodge, is satisfied with this N\$4,6m investment in the popular corporate and leisure resort's ability to generate its own power. "During the day, the installation provides the laundry and restaurant with power. It provides 92% of our required daily power usage, and that is during the reduced sunlight of winter," enthuses Williams.

According to Alensy Alternative Energy Systems operational manager, Jonathan Swart, Arebbusch is the first company in Windhoek to request a commercial system of this kind – a huge milestone. Swart handed the project over to Williams in an

official capacity on 12 July. He says the technology behind the system has been accepted in Namibia and that the panels are guaranteed for 25 years of use at a minimum of 80% capacity. “The lodge can expect to recover the value of the installation through power savings within five years,” enthuses Swart.

A type of technology already available in southern Africa – related to the installation – is an app that allows Williams to stay abreast of power provision and use at Arebbusch. Apparently, the built-in recording system provides information from as far back as a year ago and, in this way, simplifies the comparison and monitoring of the system.

Other notable solar powered hotels

Other notable green hotels and accommodation establishments in southern Africa that have employed solar power, among others, include:

- The [Vineyard Hotel](#) in Newlands, Cape Town, which boasts a 60-panel installation of Solarus Sunpower’s hybrid solar PowerCollectors. Their 90kWp hybrid photovoltaic-thermal system provides 75kW peak thermal and 15kW peak electric output to the hotel, in a system partly subsidised by the Dutch government.
- [Wilderness Safaris](#), which will be converting an increasing number of its camps – located in Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, the Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe – to 100 percent solar to help minimise any negative impacts the operations may have on the environment.

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