

MARGARITAVILLE ISLAND HOTEL'S GREEN ON-PREMISE LAUNDRY



JANUARY 2017 • By Haley Jorgensen

Suspended above a flood plain on concrete piers, Margaritaville Island Hotel, in Pigeon Forge, Tenn., is inspired by the lyrics and lifestyle of singer-songwriter Jimmy Buffet. Cradled by the Great Smoky Mountains, the 134-room resort is at the heart of an "island" wonderland marked by a 200-foot sky wheel and numerous unique shops, rides, arcades, restaurants, adventure courses and salons.



The hotel which debuted in 2014 — offers 21 unique room types, including a Celebrity Penthouse Floor consisting of three separate suites that sell like "hotcakes for \$2,000 per night," according to General Manager Kris Harmon. A full-service salon/spa and several restaurants add to its appeal.

Margaritaville Island Hotel & Laundry

Behind the scenes, a second-story laundry, engineered for efficiency, productivity and quality, processes all Island laundry, which equates to 20,000 pounds per week. Thanks to its use of ozone and Continental Girbau Inc. (Continental) soft-mount equipment, the laundry smartly saves approximately 30 percent in utility and chemical costs. Over five years, the hotel laundry is expected to shave \$95,000 from overall operating expenses.

"Outsourcing laundry would be difficult and costly," said Harmon. "Due to the popularity of action-packed Pigeon Forge attractions, the traffic here is dense. "Keeping the laundry in-house was essential."

Developing the Hotel from an Existing Condo Project

Investors handpicked Harmon, a 27-year hospitality executive, to oversee the new property during its transformation from a defunct condominium project foreclosure. Together, they envisioned and developed the Island concept. "There were a number of design challenges we hurdled because we weren't starting from a clean slate," she said. "Designing the on-premise laundry was a challenge."

To facilitate that process, Harmon connected hotel owners with Jeff Large, of Laundry Systems of Tennessee, in Sevierville. He worked integrally with the owners of Margaritaville Island Hotel to design and equip the highly efficient laundry.

Unique Laundry Design Challenges

Because the hotel and laundry are elevated on concrete pilings above a flood plain, Large installed two 90-pound capacity soft-mount Continental E-Series Washers, an ozone system, and two 120-pound capacity

Continental Pro-Series II Dryers.

Unlike hard-mount washers, soft-mount E-Series Washers are freestanding. They slide easily into place without special foundations, grout and bolt-down. They also absorb up to 95 percent of the vibration during extract for quiet operation. "The laundry shares walls with neighboring shops so quiet operation is imperative," said Harmon.

Spanning a half-mile in length, Margaritaville Island Hotel requires a typical housekeeper to travel 8 miles per day — making the laundry's central location critical. Laundry chutes, disguised as pillars, allow staff to quickly discard soiled laundry from the hotel's upper floors.

Continental Washers Deliver High-Speed Extract

Over the long term, the soft-mount washers and ozone system work together to drastically cut water, electricity and natural gas costs. When compared with hard-mount washers, which reach extract speeds of 75-200 G-force, the Continental soft-mount washers reach



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Guest rooms at Margaritaville Island Hotel.

speeds up to 380 G-force, and thus, remove considerably more water per load. “Because more moisture is removed during extract,” said Large, “it takes loads 30-50 percent less time to dry. This allows the hotel to complete more laundry in considerably less time. Dryers operate less often, which reduces dryer wear-and-tear and natural gas consumption, while extending linen life.”

All told, it takes about an hour to wash and dry a 90-pound load of high-quality terry towels. “Thanks to the soft-mount washers, laundry productivity escalates, gas usage falls and linens and towels are subject to significantly less tumbling action and wear-and-tear,” said Harmon. “Our linens last longer.”

The Double Whammy — Ozone & Soft-Mount Washers

By combining the high-efficiency washers with ozone technology, utility savings and productivity catapulted further. Altogether, the ozone-equipped laundry will save an estimated 521,000 gallons of water and 12,174 therms of natural gas per year, according to Large.

In the wash, ozone breaks down organic materials using only cold water, so the cost to heat water is minimal. “Because ozone effectively loosens material from linen fibers, it can eliminate the need for a pre-wash cycle,” said Large. As a result, washers require less water and complete cycles more quickly.

That’s a good thing, added

Harmon, because the hotel laundry processes everything washable on the Island, from bed, table and spa linens, to towels, robes and uniforms.

“We also handle laundry for our maintenance department,” said Harmon, “which includes oily, soiled rags and uniforms.”

The Value of Programmability

Equipped with the highly programmable Inteli control, each washer is programmed to automatically adjust water levels, cycle times, number of baths, water temperature and chemical injection according to fabric type. That way, towels, duvets, sheets, rags, robes, capes, table linens and shower liners, which each have separate programs,

are washed properly and consistently every time. Operators simply load, enter a program number and press start.

“We’ve got special silk sheets and duvets for massage rooms that are cleaned using a pre-programmed spa setting,” said Harmon. “The ozone and washer programmability deliver a high-quality clean and fresh fragrance.”

Dryers with Built-In Safeguards

Meanwhile, dryers with moisture-sensing technology ensure items aren’t over dried and damaged. Linens and towels last longer. “We inventory three par,” said Harmon. “Even during the summer, when occupancy is at 90 percent, we still have one par in inventory. We haven’t touched that extra third par yet because of the ozone and soft-mount washers. We aren’t buying as much linen as other hotels and we’re in our second year of operation.”

Linen replacement adds up, especially when it’s of the highest quality. It costs approximately \$10,000 to replace one par for Margaritaville Island Hotel, according to Harmon. Protecting that investment by extending par life makes good business sense.

Discover more about Margaritaville Island Hotel at www.margaritavilleislandhotel.com; Laundry Systems of Tennessee at www.tnlaundry.com; and Continental Girbau at www.cgilaundry.com or 800-256-1073.



Pictured with Margaritaville Island Hotel General Manager Kris Harmon is Jeff Large, right, and Duran Harmon, left, of Laundry Systems of Tennessee.