

THE SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES OF AWARD-WINNING RESTAURANTS IN NEW ZEALAND

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ABSTRACT

In seeking to influence their customers, restaurants are increasingly promoting their sustainability attributes online. However, research on online promotion of sustainability practices has usually been conducted in countries with specific sustainability or green restaurant certifications or awards, such as Michelin restaurants. This research aims to fill a significant gap in knowledge in relation to the online promotion of sustainability by restaurants in non-Michelin award countries and in a country with no sustainable or green restaurant certification of its own to identify the prevalence of online promotion of sustainability attributes. Restaurants examined consist of those nominated to the New Zealand Restaurant Association awards, those listed in the *Cuisine* Good Food Guide hatted restaurant list and those listed as the best in TripAdvisor. A total of 294 restaurants were subject to content analysis. The results suggest that the use of seasonal and local produce was the most widely adopted sustainability measures, which is comparable to international research. Unlike international sustainable restaurant schemes however there was little emphasis on sustainably harvested fish, Fairtrade products, and animal ethics. Furthermore, many restaurants do not appear to promote their sustainability practices. The results shed light on the online promotion of restaurant sustainability practices and raises significant questions about the extent of sustainability practices outside of formal certification or award systems.

Keywords: Sustainable Restaurant, Green Restaurant, Online Restaurant Marketing, Online Restaurant Promotion

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