

Green Dot Awards  
Service Category

Insider London's Cutting-Edge Green Tour



Background and contact information about the business, organization, or company

Insider London is an innovative, award-winning tour company for visitors and locals alike. It was founded in March 2008 by Londoner and eco-designer Cate Trotter, aged 26.

Insider London tours are created and led by its coolhunters who know the city like the backs of their hands, taking visitors straight to the best that this world-leading city has to offer. The tours include cutting-edge retail concepts, design and its intriguing and hidden secrets, revealing the most dynamic sides of the capital.

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## Detailed explanation of the entry

### *Overview*

Insider London's Cutting-Edge Green Tour is a three-hour crash course in sexy sustainability, showing off some of London's best products, gorgeous shops, futuristic architecture and inspiring communities. And the initiatives aren't just some of the most exciting concepts in London: the city's world-leading status means the examples are some of the best on the planet. Interested individuals have found the tours really rewarding and informative, as well as an inspirational alternative to the depressing environmental news we hear on a daily basis. Professionals use to tour to go straight to the latest innovations in green, learning new approaches to communicating ethics as well as finding new potential collaborators.

The tour has been praised for the variety of initiatives it covers, ranging from a futuristic, biodegradable shoe to the site of a much loved community development that managed to fight off a huge commercial development to benefit both London and its visitors. There's never a dull moment: any time spent waiting for public transport is filled with interesting examples and snippets of information, thanks to the guide's 'magic bag' that is crammed with pioneering sustainable products for the group to see and touch.

The tour is planned, researched and led by the guide, an ex-eco designer and ethical marketing professional, who has met many of the people behind the initiatives so customers can learn what really happened. Whatever is being highlighted and discussed, visitors gain vivid experience of it first-hand, as opposed to a lifeless, online learning experience. And as the tour only includes initiatives that would interest the guide herself, the level of innovation and discussion is pushed far beyond recycled paper and organic food.

### *Summary of Route*

The tour starts in Shoreditch, one of the most creative parts of the city, meaning it is a breeding ground for some of the best and most eye-catching green thinking. The tour's first stop is Andaz, London's first green hotel. Its toilets use 80% less water thanks to an airline suction flush system and its innovative digital check-in gadgets significantly reduce paper use. Customers then get to sample ethically produced gourmet food in a number of independent stores, before hearing the story behind Rootmaster, a vegan restaurant on a bus that helps people reduce the impact of their meal by 90%. Next stop is Junky Styling, which uses its on-site workshop to transform traditional British jackets and shirts into futuristic corsets, eye-catching skirts and other unique pieces.

Whilst waiting for the bus that will take the group over Tower Bridge, the guide delves into her bag to hand round a range of more sustainable shoes that demonstrate five different approaches to green design. On the bus, visitors see the site and proposed plans for a 480m high eco-building as well as London's only floating gardens.

After a fair-trade coffee break in a pioneering eco-building, customers learn how City Hall's eye-catching spherical form helps it achieve a 75% reduction in energy use. A hundred metre walk away is a Marks & Spencer store, where its aggressive Plan A is outlined, showing that it is just as possible for international businesses to overhaul their sustainability as it is for the little guy. The group then takes the route of London's hydrogen fuel cell bus trial past Palestra, a majestic building that features wind turbines and Britain's first hydrogen fuel cell for a building, before finishing up at the 13-acre Coin Street site. This attractive development contains 4 housing co-operatives, studios for independent designers and the Neighbourhood Centre, which provides support and skills classes for the community. The guide explains how strong communities such as this provide the foundation of environmentally responsible communities, equipping people with the emotional energy they need to care for others and the planet. Customers are then free to explore the Coin Street shops and cafes, or to experience the vibrant river-front festivals that often occur on the site at weekends.

## *Customers*

Whether new to the field or green veterans, professionals have found the tour extremely rewarding, using it to fuel their ideas and boost their networks. Student groups have gained inspiration and discovered potential employers through the tour, as well as gaining tips on working in the field from the guide. Interested Londoners come along to see a fresh side to their city, with open-minded tourists taking part to break away from the normal tourist routes.

## *What's been said*

"Trotter is a bubbly, engaging guide with a real passion for her subject"

- Time Out London

"Professional and relaxed at the same time, and likely to surprise even the most knowledgeable London greenies"

- Sam Bond, Edie.net

"I absolutely loved it. The range and variety of the examples was particularly good. I would recommend the tour to anyone"

- Paul Manem, web designer, Windsor

"It was a real eye-opener. I saw a very different and very positive side to the London I thought I knew inside out!"

- Catherine Bourke, Waste Awareness Officer, Eastbourne Borough Council

"Really interesting and informative - well designed, well led"

- Ian Pearson, until recently with DynEd International, based in Malaysia



## **How the entry is manufactured and delivered to its consumers**

The tour was written and is delivered by Cate Trotter, Insider London's founder. Her eight years of experience in the fields of sustainable design and marketing equipped her to pinpoint initiatives that are at the forefront of sustainability. Having seen hundreds of green designs and concepts over the years, Cate only included initiatives that made her think 'wow', in order to make customers do the same.

As part of her research, Cate interviewed many of those she had not already met who are responsible for the ventures. This included meeting the founders of Terra Plana, Junky Styling and Rootmaster and the team behind the Coin Street Co-operative. The interviews brought a wealth of new information to light that enables Cate to relay information that cannot be learnt anywhere else.

Cate's professional experience provides a large part of the tour's value, not only in the form of her in-depth, specialist knowledge, but through her experience in explaining concepts to those new to them and through her extreme level of positivity and passion. Many in-depth and complex questions can be answered, covering sustainability in general, London's plans and initiatives elsewhere in the world. Customers are more than welcome to add their opinion: group sizes are deliberately kept small to encourage discussion and debate.

The tour is constantly evolving and improving, as Cate builds on her sustainability knowledge and new points of interest are added to the route.

### **How the entry and its function/use maintains excellence in eco-sustainability in an environmentally friendly and responsible manner**

Every stop on the tour is a positive, exciting and inspiring example of sustainability in action. By demonstrating that green innovation is happening all around us, the tours shows that sustainable living is as achievable as it is desirable.

The tour's positive approach encourages businesspeople to build, sell and design with green living in mind, to enthuse and involve customers as much as to help the environment. Individuals learn that sustainability, creativity and innovation are inherently linked. The tour makes locals feel more enthusiastic about the city they live in, and provides foreigners with a new level of positivity, helping ideas at the forefront of sustainability travel around the world much faster.

The tour itself is a low-carbon experience, moving around the city on foot and using public transport. Even the coffee break occurs in a visually stunning eco-building, where organic, fair-trade coffee is sold.

