



We set you thinking
THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2015

lifestyle

Song Saa founder Rory Hunter on successful sustainability in the resort business



Rory Hunter hopes Song Saa will show the travel industry it's possible...

[\[MORE\]](#)

View all 0 comments

Like Share 5 *Pinit* G+1 0 Tweet 4

More news

SINGAPORE
TODAY's brief, Thursday, Nov 19

BY SERENE LIM

serenelim@mediacorp.com.sg

PUBLISHED: 4:16 AM, NOVEMBER 19, 2015

(PAGE 1 OF 1) - PAGINATE

SINGAPORE — There are resorts that look good and there are resorts that do a great deal of good. The three-year-old Song Saa Private Island, occupying two islands off Cambodia's Koh Rong archipelago, has managed to do both, it seems.

Two weeks ago, it picked up The Eco Award at the annual Smith Hotel Awards organised by boutique hotel guide Mr and Mrs Smith.

"We are incredibly grateful to be recognised within this category which champions hotels 'making ideals a reality', and more importantly, by an organisation that is so reputable and revered in the travel space," said Rory Hunter, founder of Song Saa.

The former ad man who first moved to Cambodia in 2004 for a one-year work trip ended up staying and establishing Song Saa with his wife after falling in love with the country. That also motivated his work with Song Saa Foundation, which has since set up the archipelago's first marine reserve; and Boat of Hope, a service bringing doctors to the population in the area.

"Song Saa began on the premise of my wife and I discovering these beautiful islands and becoming quickly privy to the amount of attention, care and help it needed from a conservation point of view, as well as social development for the communities living in the surrounding islands," the Aussie explained. "We didn't need to think about it, we just had to act and keep looking forward."

Q: Song Saa has also received other awards, such as Asia's Leading Private Island at the World Travel Awards and the Hideaway of the Year by Hideaway Magazine. How have these awards helped put Song Saa and Cambodia on the map as a resort destination?

A: These awards have been so humbling and so incredibly powerful. For such a young brand to be

recognised among some of the most revered brands in the industry has been a true motivator to continue doing what we do and make plans to grow our brand and operation.

Q: Speaking of growth, could you also tell us more about Song Saa's upcoming projects?

A: We are looking at a site in Siem Reap but we are only in the initial phases. We are looking at other frontier markets such as Myanmar and Indonesia as well. Our goal is to grow the brand, but equally important is pursuing environmental and social needs of the particular area.

Q: How can travellers be more conscientious about choosing accommodation that is more sustainable or eco-minded?

A: Third party endorsements are always a good sign. We have incredible supporters such as Positive Luxury. The foundation alone has incredible support from many credible organisations such as Prince Albert's Flora and Fauna.

Q: Most travellers to Cambodia are already familiar with Siem Reap and Phnom Penh. Where else do you suggest they go?

A: Some of my favourite trips have been to Kep and Kampot located in Cambodia's south coast. Kampot is a distinctly serene and naturally beautiful riverside town surrounded by a national park. We love to hike through the beautiful rainforest in Bokor National Park, catch a longtail boat along Kampot River to the island in the middle, or do a walking tour of the abandoned French colonial mansions, which are eerily frozen in time. Kampot pepper crab is also divine. The best specimens come from the mud flats; the sweetness of the meat contrasting beautifully with the kick of the pepper.

Link to Article: <http://www.todayonline.com/lifestyle/travel/song-saa-founder-rorry-hunter-successful-sustainability-resort-business?singlepage=true>