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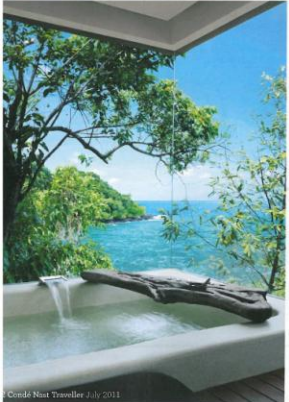
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Song Saa, Cambodia's first private-island resort, is set on two islets in the Koh Rong archipelago and will have 27 sea-view villas with private pools



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EDITED BY EMILY MATHESON

CAMBODIA

LOVE SONG TO THE EAST

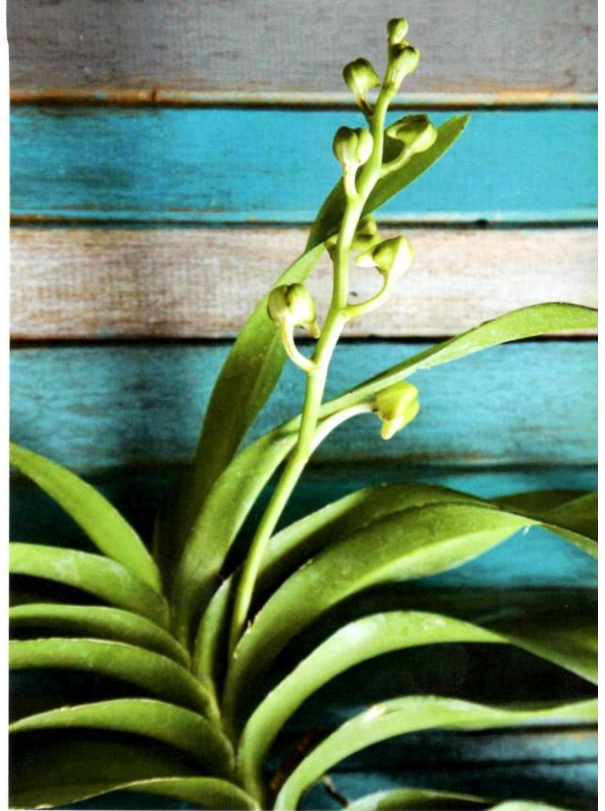
Cambodia's hotel scene comes of age with a jungle-meets-beach resort perfectly in tune with its environment

Ten years ago, the journey from Kep, on Cambodia's southwest coast, to the unspoiled Koh Rong archipelago took half a day by longboat and was undertaken by only the most intrepid backpackers. Now the islands can be reached in about an hour by private plane from Phnom Penh or Siem Reap. Thanks to **Song Saa**, the country's first over-island resort. "We want to appeal to these same people 20 years on – their tastes balances may have changed but their sense of adventure hasn't," says owner Rory Hunter. Along with his wife, Melissa, Hunter has spent four years building Song Saa on two formerly uninhabited islets, now joined by a narrow footbridge above a marine reserve that the couple have worked hard with locals to safeguard. Despite limited hospitality experience, the Hunters have drawn

inspiration from the world's best destination resorts (spite from Amanresorts' eco-luxurians from Sri Serres, a manager from COMO and a chef from straight in from North Island in the Seychelles) and added their own progressive ideas about design and sustainability. The hotel will open in December with 27 sea-view villas. If all goes to plan, we can expect to see further Song Saa launches opening in other Cambodian locations over the next three years.

THE LOWDOWN

Song Saa Private Island (0242 255482, www.songsa.com). Double from US\$150 (private plane transfers US\$500 return). Whole island from US\$1,000 a night, full board. Book with Original Travel (www.originaltravel.co.uk)



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