New Tented Eco Camp Keeps Rainforest Standing in Cardamom Mountains, Cambodia





A NEW tented camp is being opened in southwest Cambodia with the tagline, “Your Stay Keeps the Forest Standing.”

Guests staying at the Cardamom Tented Camp will be sustaining a conservation-friendly business that was set up to help keep an 18,000-hectare (180 km2) concession out of the hands of loggers, poachers and sand mining operations. The tract of land in Botum Sakor National Park, part of a vital elephant migration corridor, is managed by Wildlife Alliance, a Cambodia-based organisation involved in wildlife rescue and forest conservation.

Wildlife Alliance is supported by the Golden Triangle Asian Elephant Foundation, an initiative of the Minor Group.

The nature conservation concession includes diverse habitats: seaside mangroves, lowland tropical forests, and triple-tiered canopy in the hills, which reach up to 335 metres (1,100ft) elevation. Asian elephants, dhole, clouded leopards, hog badgers, sun bears, mouse deer and pangolin all rely on the mature forest habitat around the camp.

Neighbouring concessions have been taken over by companies that cut indigenous timber and replace it with rubber or palm oil monoculture trees that cannot sustain wildlife diversity. The new camp is making a stand against that trend.

Guests at the new lodge on the Preak Tachan river will be able to take guided day hikes and river trips with local rangers. While walking, guests will be able to spot wildlife and learn about the mangrove and rainforest ecosystems and the challenges of keeping naturally mature forests standing in face of pressure to ‘develop’.

Visitors can also help by replanting indigenous trees in degraded parts of the concession, go kayaking, help rangers on patrols with their camera traps, or engage in other conservation activities.

At the eco-camp, which is a three way initiative between the Minor Group, YAANA Ventures and Wildlife Alliance, a percentage of the revenue will go directly to Wildlife Alliance. Any profits will be reinvested locally.

“When we tell guests, ‘Your stay keeps the forest standing,’ we 100% mean it,” says John Roberts the Minor Group’s Group Director of Sustainability and Conservation. The Minor Group’s Golden Triangle Asian Elephant Foundation has been fully funding the ranger protection efforts for the past four years at the site.

A condition of holding the concession from the Cambodian government is that economic activity must take place. Drawing on successful ecotourism models from across the world, a low impact tented camp was chosen by the stakeholders as the best sustainable option.

Bangkok-based YAANA Ventures was invited to create the camp, based on its previous experience running the Banteay Chhmar community tented camp in Banteay Meanchey, Cambodia and the

Anurak Lodge at Khao Sok National Park in southern Thailand.

“The tented camp sets an example for the local and national economy as a sustainable alternative to illegal logging, poaching and habitat destruction,” says Willem Niemeijer, CEO of YAANA Ventures. “The combined expertise of the stakeholders makes this a uniquely qualified project.”

The Cardamom Tented Camp will soft open 1 September with nine comfortable, furnished tented accommodations, each with an en-suite bathroom and a large patio area.

The camp, with a riverside restaurant, is off grid and largely powered by solar panels.

Cardamom Tented Camp can be reached by road from Phnom Penh, while Trat airport and Koh Chang in Thailand is less than a four-hour drive away.

The Cardamom Tented Camp will open bookings on 25 July for stays after 1 September 2017. Pricing, packages with tours and activities, and all-inclusive deals, will be announced shortly.

Further information: CardamomTentedCamp.com.

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About YAANA Ventures
YAANA Ventures is an owner, partner and operator of entrepreneurial travel and hospitality ventures in Asia. YAANA distinguishes itself by sharing real experiences that are grounded in the cultural richness of Asia. The company is the champion of the triple bottom-line: it empowers its ventures with the values to nurture the people with whom it works. Visit http://yaana-ventures.com/.

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