

CADILLAC

MAGAZINE

THE WELL-DRIVEN LIFE
WINTER 2016



KINGDOM OF AWE

EXPLORING THE
EXOTIC BEAUTY OF
CAMBODIA

JASON MRAZ
PLANTS THE SEEDS
OF KINDNESS

FIRST-EVER
CT6 TAKES
A DOWNTOWN
DRIVE

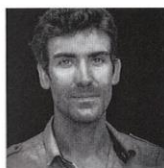
THE SHARED
WORKSPACE
COMES OF AGE

CONTRIBUTORS



ERIC CHANG
// WRITER

WE ENLISTED the co-founder of the design house Hellman-Chang to interview red-hot style influencer Nick Wooster. During their two-hour conversation at Morandi, Chang was struck by the fact that "Wooster was unassuming and humble beyond the reputation that precedes him—the man is a true sartorial academic." Chang was selected to be one of the featured entrepreneurs and faces of UBS's global rebranding campaign, shot by Annie Leibovitz.



LUC FORSYTH
// PHOTOGRAPHER

CURRENTLY LIVING in Phnom Penh, Forsyth ("Kingdom of Awe") has been based in various locations in Asia for the last seven years. "Even though I've called Cambodia home for the last several years and the Angkor temple complex is in my backyard, every time I visit I am blown away by the scope and history of the place," says the lensman, whose images have appeared in *The New York Times* and *Time*.

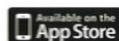


DREW LIMSKY // EDITOR

"IN STORIES THAT take us from the cobblestoned streets of Soho to steamy Southeast Asia, and from the culinary world of the Napa Valley to a nighttime Sydney lit up by technology, this issue of *Cadillac Magazine* reveals the best and boldest that life has to offer," says editor Drew Limsky. After taking on the serpentine Hana Highway in the XTS and the tip of Baja in the ATS, Limsky hopped a flight (actually four flights) to Siem Reap, Cambodia, to immerse himself in Khmer culture for our cover story, "Kingdom of Awe." "Angkor Wat and the surrounding temples offer such a sensory overdose that you actually reel from it," he says. "And discovering luxury amid timeless ruins was a total surprise. But perhaps the biggest gift I left Cambodia with was a reminder that it's okay to be still, to take your time, to greet and thank with your hands over your heart. My gratitude extends to the leaders in their fields—Jason Mraz, Daniel Libeskind, Nick Cannon, and Tali Sharot among them—who took the time to be profiled in these pages."

MORE CONTRIBUTORS // **WRITING** David Bahr, Shayne Benowitz, Christine Ciarmello, Charles Desselle, Robert Gritzinger, Becca Hensley, Laurie Heifetz, Victor Ozols, Lynn Parramore, Kathy Passero, Eugene Yiga
PHOTOGRAPHY/ILLUSTRATION Dean Bradshaw, Luc Forsyth, Danielle Evans, Roy Ritchie, Jenny Risher, John Konkal, Ako and Atiba Jefferson, Qian Dongsheng, Julene Harrison, Joe Vaughn

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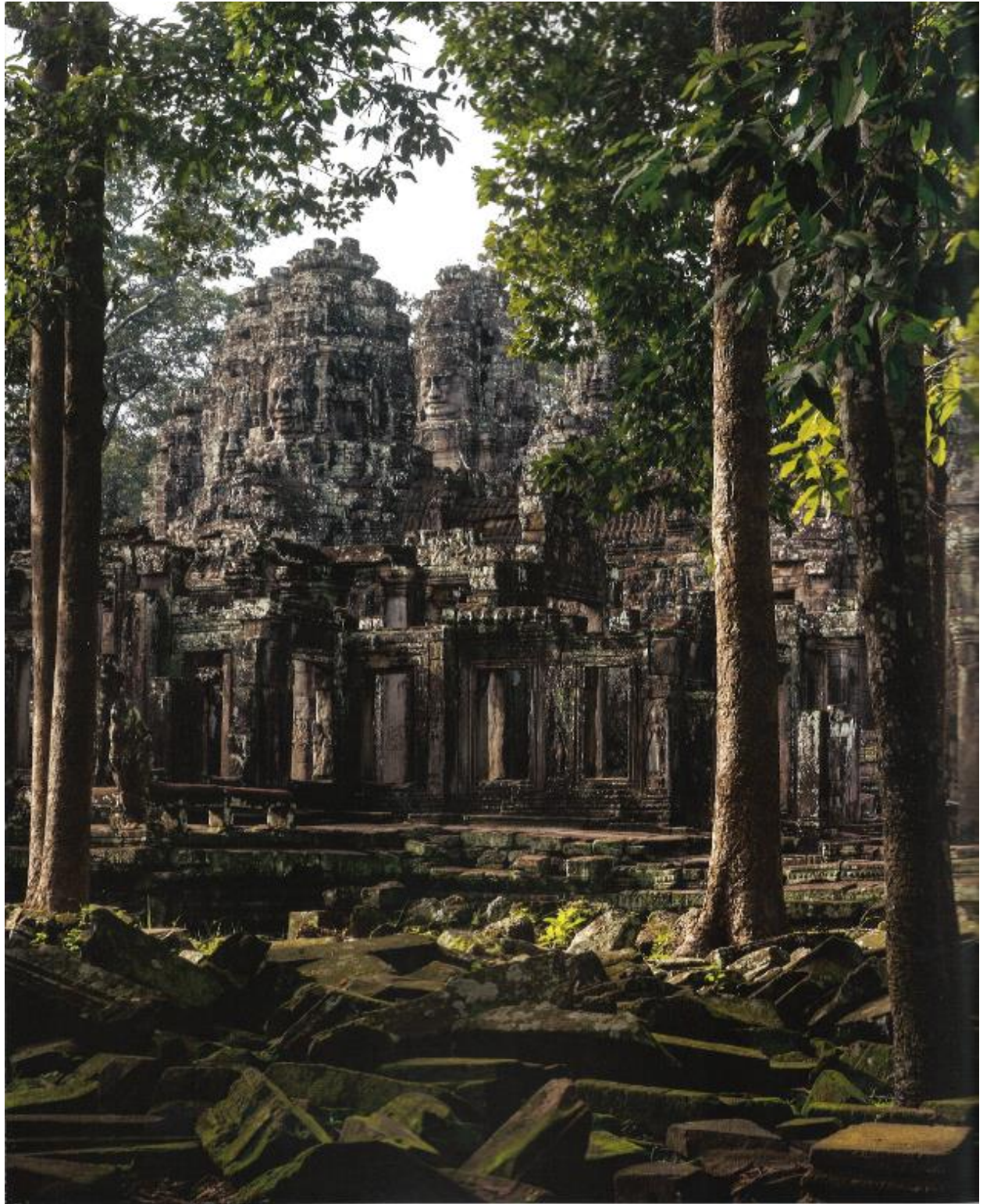
CHRIS SHEEDY
// WRITER

THE AUSTRALIAN journalist saw his old hometown in a completely new and dazzling light when he reported "Light Fantastic"; "I joined the human tide that flowed through the CBD every night of Vivid Sydney," he says. "Highly designed light shows—an art form known as projection mapping—are taking off in cities around the globe." Sheedy's credits include *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *GQ*, *Virgin Australia Voyeur*, and *The Australian*.

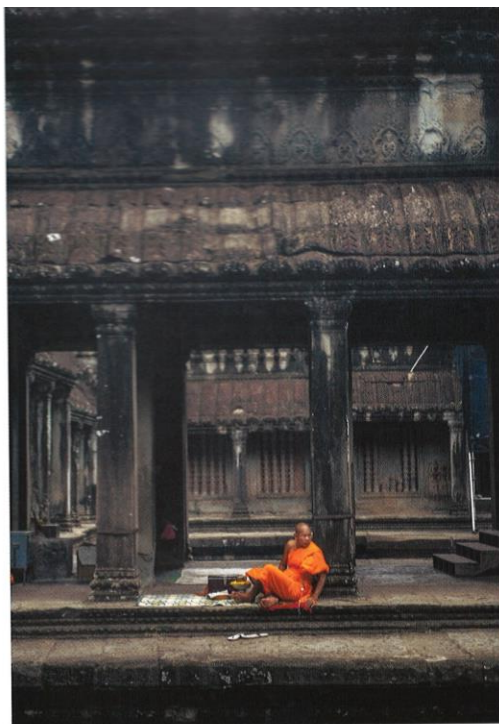


DEAN BRADSHAW
// PHOTOGRAPHER

"THIS WAS my first time shooting a lion," says Bradshaw of his experience creating the images for "Introducing Max: The Master of Illumination." "We turned an old shipping and receiving warehouse into a whimsical scene from another time." Bradshaw, who is based in LA, has worked for American Express, Asics, National Geographic Channel, Diageo, and Acer.



ABOVE A spectacular setting, within a country that is full of exotic sites, Bayon Temple in the northern section of Cambodia features massive and serene faces along its many towers. **RIGHT** A saffron-robed monk reclines at Angkor Wat, one of the most important archaeological and cultural sites in the world.



KINGDOM *of* AWE

Tucked between Vietnam and Thailand, Cambodia has a history—insistent, immersive, and thrillingly tangible—that breaks through the tropical air. The culture and customs of the country will take your breath away

BY DREW LIMSKY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LUC FORSYTH

there are hundreds, absolutely hundreds, of open-air carriages being pulled along by sputtering motorcycles. Elsewhere in Southeast Asia they're called *tuk-tuks*; in Cambodia, *remorks*. It is before daybreak, so the air is still if not yet stifling, and these modern-day rickshaw taxis are stopping along the well-worn road from the nearby city of Siem Reap, disgorging backpackers from Sydney, families from South



Korea, and honeymooners from Madrid. Cambodia, reopened to mass tourism for less than two decades, now seems to be on everyone's shortlist.

temporarily without passengers, the wiry, wily drivers circle the already-full parking lot; a few have found prime spots and snooze under their remork canopies. Sleeping is possible because despite the near-frantic flow of people in an unfamiliar place—a place nestled within a relentlessly exotic land that is still called a kingdom—it's amazing how quiet it is.

Angkor Wat—City of Temples—has been left alone all night, as it is every night. As Cambodia's calling card, the hallowed structure is depicted on the nation's flag; it is the most visited spot in the 10,000-acre Angkor Archaeological Park, but for some, that wasn't enough. Around eight years ago there was a push to turn the sprawling 900-year-old archeological site into regular paid evening entertainment, with a light and music show, but the locals were having none of that. There aren't many manmade structures in the world

that are this old and this well preserved, where it is possible to apprehend a kind of pure vision—the tangible culmination of a culture. Or several cultures: Places where Hindu motifs give way to Buddhism are many, reflecting the back-and-forth shift of power between the two faiths, over centuries.

One reason that the locals were so against the further commercialization of Angkor Wat is that they believe the classic Khmer complex is too spectacular, too sacred, to have been created by man, so it had to have been conceived by God. "A lot of people feel that it should be an active spiritual place," explains my guide, Ros Sovann. That Angkor Wat functions rather as a historical site, albeit one with daytime hours only, represents a kind of compromise. "We can make money during the daytime," he says, "but at nighttime the gods rest."

To reach the temples, hundreds of tourists on foot cross the 600-foot-wide moat, by way of a sandstone causeway. Long-tailed macaque monkeys weave in and out, then pause, observing the procession. The visitors file between great balustrades that are topped with the

ABOVE Luxury accommodations, such as the regal Belmond La Résidence d'Angkor hotel in Siem Reap, offer respite from the heat. RIGHT Angkor Wat, City of Temples, shines as day breaks.



A morning walk AMONG 12TH-CENTURY TEMPLES IS A LOT TO
ABSORB, SO REFLECTION AND REPOSE *is a good idea.*

massive carved *naga*—the king cobra about to strike—that is a ubiquitous architectural feature in Cambodia. But I sit on the outer wall with Sovann, at a respectful distance, watching for the sunrise to reveal the five main towers—the iconic quincunx—of Angkor Wat.

Angkor Wat was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1992, a year after the signing of the Paris Peace Accords that ended the Cambodian-Vietnamese War. The UNESCO designation seems far too mild a citation; this is, after all, the largest religious monument on the planet, created with peerless fluency and harmony—and remarkable durability. To think of the technologies and engineering know-how involved in its construction—well, some of it is still a mystery, Sovann tells me. Two million people come to experience this sandstone enigma each year, and this is how many of them start their journeys, with words of wonder, words of awe, in the near-dark. This is how I start mine, waiting for the towers (the tallest one at 699 feet) to show their distinctly serrated edges and pointy tips to the steamy morning. And so my first day in Cambodia begins with an unmistakable silhouette outlined by the rising sun.

by everything he says, Sovann reminds me that in Cambodia, the past is never far away. He was born during the brutal communist Khmer Rouge regime (1975–1979), which emerged during the Vietnam War and allied itself with North Vietnam and the Viet Cong. The reign of the Khmer Rouge was a time of unfathomable atrocity when 2 million Cambodians—an estimated one-quarter of the population—were murdered. “I never thought for a moment that Cambodia could have any peace,” Sovann says. He didn’t meet any outsiders until 1991. Mass surrender by the Khmer Rouge came three years later. “We had peace,” Sovann says, “and the Khmer Rouge who used to fight put down their guns.” But as late as 1995, foreign visitors to Angkor Wat were made to observe a 3 p.m. hotel curfew. Sovann became a tour guide in 1998, when security could be assured, and then the real tourist influx began. As Sovann tells it, it was then that the spirit of Cambodia was finally set free.

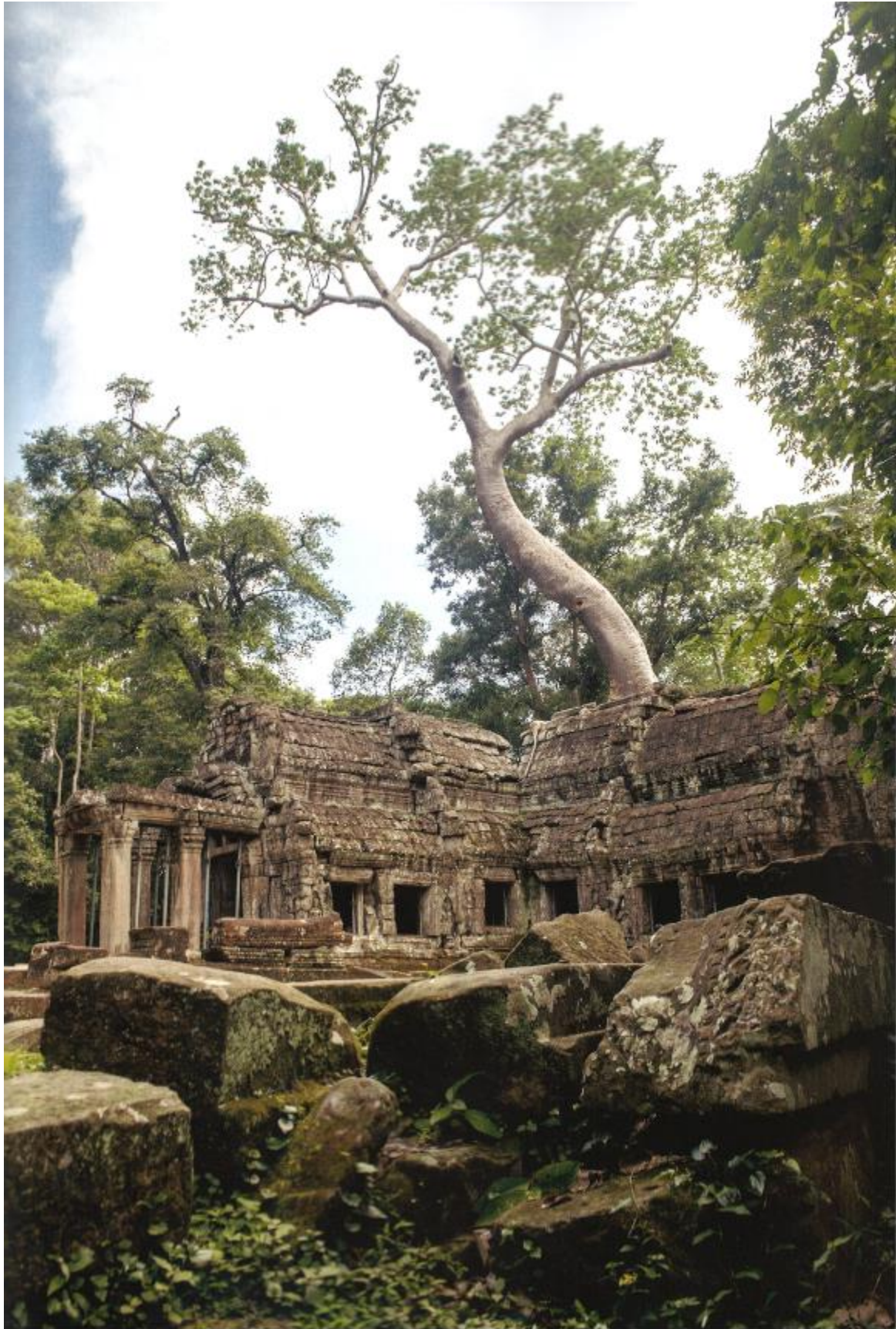
My hotel, Raffles Grand Hotel d’Angkor, draws me into a different past. Opened in 1932, it’s the only luxury hotel in Siem Reap that predates the Khmer Rouge era (after extensive refurbishment, the hotel reopened in 1997 under the Raffles flag). With its art deco colonial décor—the original cage elevator instantly becomes my favorite “room” in the hotel—Raffles epitomizes early 20th-century French Indochina. I’m transported back to colonial life, where kindly staffers in crisp white uniforms greet me with a bow and place their palms together over their hearts, in the traditional *sampeah* greeting.

Sovann drops me off at the hotel for breakfast, and frankly, I wonder why it’s necessary, why we don’t just continue on to the other famous sites on our agenda, Angkor Thom and Ta Prohm. But then it becomes clear to me. Kensington Tours, for which Sovann works, has broken up the day into thirds, like a three-act play: sunrise at Angkor Wat; then Angkor Thom and Ta Prohm; and finally, a late-afternoon climb to the top terrace of Angkor Wat. A morning walk among 12th-century temples is a lot to absorb, so reflection and repose—and getting out of the heat—is a good idea. And then there’s this: Breakfast at Raffles is an event. There are French cheeses, a veritable pâtisserie with croissants and four kinds of muffins and apricot danishes shaped like stars, crepes made to order, hot Khmer delicacies in clay pots, bowls of melon and dragonfruit and fuzzy red lychees, pitchers of pineapple and guava juice ... too many choices to catalogue.

After my second return trip to the huge bamboo steamer for more *har gau*, I turn to see CNN host Fareed Zakaria with his wife, Paula Throckmorton, holding court at the next table. He has everyone’s rapt attention. I don’t linger long. I am in serious need of a restorative swim in the hotel’s infinity pool, which lies like a vast, hypnotizing mirror on an austere deck ringed with frangipani trees.

An hour later, Sovann is waiting for me in the lobby, our young driver Soyawn Lee idling by the curb. On the way to Angkor Thom, I ask Sovann about the *krama*, the scarf he hangs around his neck. He tells

RIGHT A tree sprouts from Ta Prohm (featured in *Tomb Raider*), an ancient temple near Cambodia’s Siem Reap. The structure was built as a Buddhist monastery and university in the late 12th and early 13th century.





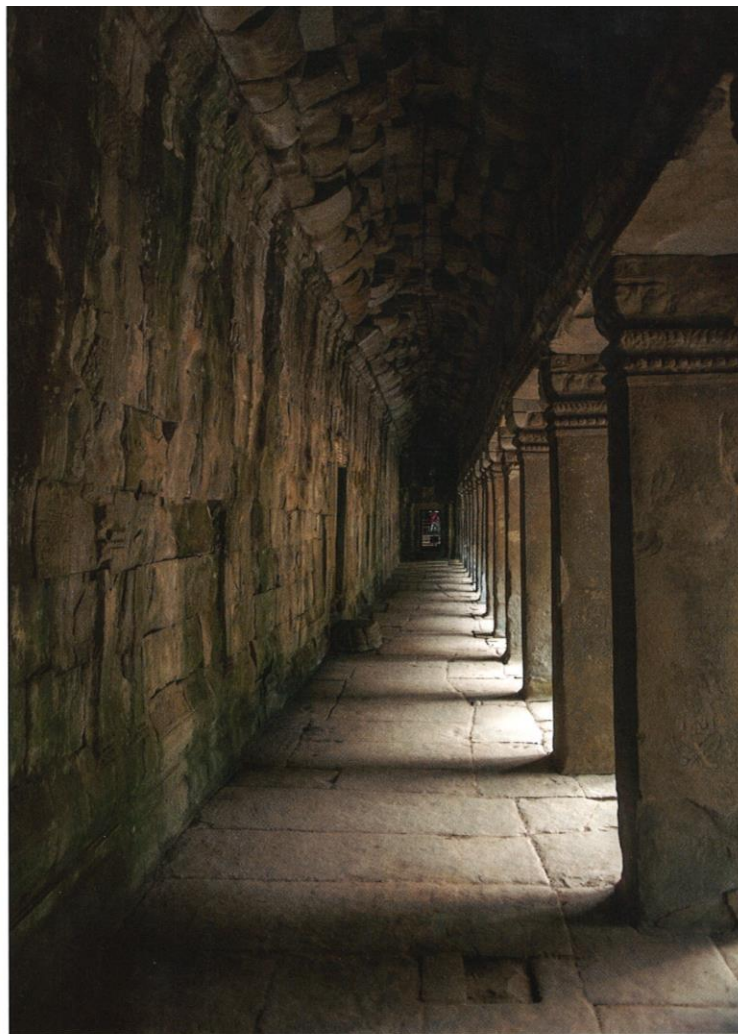
me the checked cloth has many purposes—obvious ones, like wiping brow sweat, to ones I couldn't have guessed, like collecting loganberries from the trees. And then Sovann laughs when he tells me that sometimes he sees mothers tie the ends of the krama to the handlebars of a motorcycle like a mini-hammock, put a baby in the middle, and speed down the humid streets of Siem Reap.

When we reach the south gate of the late 12th-century ruins of Angkor Thom (Great City), I realize that I've seen this place in photographs. The road, thronged with cars and remorks and motorbikes and foot traffic, passes directly under an arch topped by a huge, placid laterite face; this gate has to be one

of the world's great entrances, and I feel the sense of moment as I approach it. The heads of elephants decorate either side of the arch, their trunks elongated and—like all the ruins in the Archeological Park—darkly and cinematically caked in lichen.

Buddhist monks in their saffron robes walk along the galleries, studying the bas-relief *devas* (Hindu gods and goddesses), the warriors and oarsmen, the fish and monkeys, the dragons and naga. Sovann and I climb to the upper terrace of Bayon, which sits in the exact center of Angkor Thom. This temple is more ornate than those of Angkor Wat, more oddly intimate: Huge carved faces—216 of them, multiple masks of serenity on each tower—are everywhere.

ABOVE For the residents of Cambodia, these ancient sites are just part of the local scenery. A woman rides her bicycle along the tree-lined road near Angkor Thom. RIGHT A gallery at Ta Prohm reflects the serenity that entices visitors.



(I've seen the same faces in town, and among the hotel staffers, looking placid or even severe, until they disarm with their brilliant smiles.) Sovann tells me where to stand so he can snap a photo of me in which my profile—through a trick of perspective—appears to be touching a stone profile facing me.

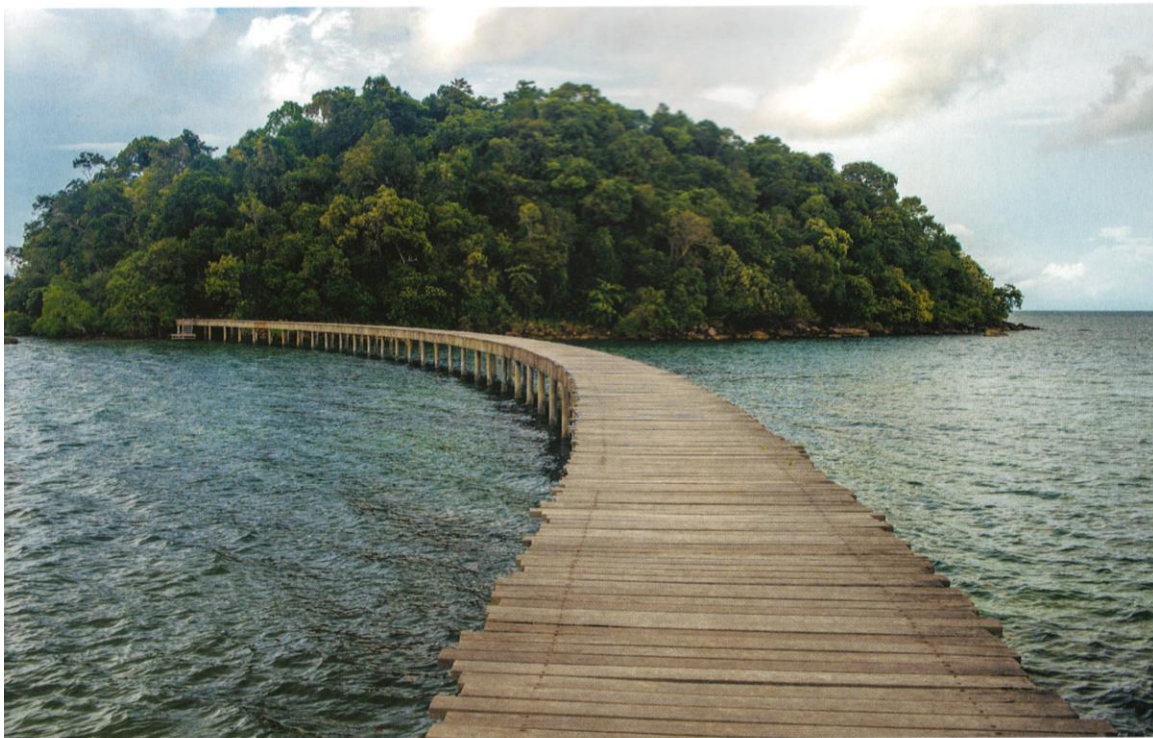
Ta Prohm, just east of Angkor Thom, is as fantastically creepy and menacing as it appeared in the movie *Tomb Raider* (2001). Its eeriness derives from the fact that it has been left for the elements to swallow it up. Built in the late 12th century and abandoned in the 17th, the temple is seemingly being enveloped by silk-cotton trees and strangler figs, with trunks and roots dripping heavily over the rooflines and twisting angrily against the carved walls. (I say "seemingly" because the site's restorers are actually striking a hard-won balance between protecting the temple from nature's might and keeping intact its distinctive look of decay.)

I turn a corner and begin to make my way down an exposed corridor, when Sovann points at something: In one spot, a tree has completely covered a wall, save for a hole scarcely big enough for a tiny bas-relief face to peer through. Its tranquil, half-disappeared expression is chilling, reminding me of the very tenuous nature of Cambodia itself.

speaking of tenuous, Song Saa feels like it might be blown away by the next tropical wind; the wind is so loud that I hear it before I feel it. But the sole private island resort in Cambodia is doing some very real and enduring things. I've come here to decompress after the intensity of Angkor, and again locate—along with luxurious privacy and natural beauty—the palpable Cambodian values of preservation and cultural rescue.

The first thing to know about Song Saa is that it's on island time—an overused expression, to be sure, but





on point in this case. Located off coastal Sihanoukville, Song Saa delivers an unexpected amenity right off the bat: its own time zone. Hong Kong-based owners Rory and Melita Hunter actually turned the resort's clocks forward to give guests an extra hour of sun. The Hunters do things differently because they can. From Siem Reap, it takes a plane, a van, and a boat to get here, so mainland rules are left back in the churning waters of the channels.

Song Saa means "sweetheart" in Khmer: It's called that because the resort is actually located on a pair of islands, conjoined (by a footbridge) like lovers. One island has the 27 overwater and jungle villas. My overwater accommodation has a beautifully redundant overwater pool. And a Roman-style tub. And three showers, two of them outdoors. And a glass panel in the floor. Melita, an interior designer, is responsible for the look of the resort—no small feat when Song Saa's main material is driftwood (which is the name of the beach bar). Wood is everywhere here: found wood, native wood, wood repurposed from old fishing boats. Song Saa: If you make the time and effort to come here,

you'd better like wood, wind, and water. The second island is a nature preserve that has a trail cut through the woods—and nothing else. That tells you something.

Song Saa's luxury quotient is complemented by its commitment to Cambodia and Cambodians, specifically to the environment and to the welfare of the people of the nearby Koh Rong archipelago. The three-year-old resort's philanthropic efforts spawned the Song Saa Foundation, which became a bona fide nonprofit two years ago. Ben Thorne, the foundation's Oxford-born project director, recites the names of the five villages that the foundation supports by supplying everything from vitamins to teachers. Emma Gallacher, conservation manager at Song Saa, shows me firsthand what the foundation has done for the Koh Rong village of Prek Suay, aka Mango River, from rubbish cleanup to building a tidy school. (Some mornings, Emma gives some of the local resort staffers swimming lessons.)

I quickly decide that Koh Rong, an island the size of Hong Kong, doesn't look far, that I can swim it from Song Saa's beach. When I tell the dashing general manager Bradlie Goian of my plan, he doesn't

LEFT It takes a plane, a van, and a boat to arrive at the eco-friendly Song Saa resort along the southeast coast of Cambodia. A journey, yes, but one well worth it. **ABOVE** Wood, used for this footbridge linking the resort's two islands, was the primary material used to create Song Saa. Much of it is found wood, salvaged from the sea.

Wood is everywhere here: FOUND WOOD, NATIVE WOOD,
WOOD REPURPOSED FROM OLD FISHING BOATS.

look at all alarmed, but asks me to have someone kayak alongside me. Adventurous guest requests don't faze Goian; before he took the post at Song Saa, he was with Aman Resorts in Bhutan. So the next day I set out with Sol from the watersports shack. He's an experienced diver, but he looks doubtful. He points to a sliver of a beach that he says is free of spiny urchins, and we decide that's our endpoint.

It's an easy swim, even when it gets deep in the middle. When it gets shallow fast, the two of us pull up on a sandbar. (Shore-to-shore time: 17 minutes.) We walk the length of the beach to a fishing pier. Sol points out different kinds of shells. He smiles and tells me that I don't talk much; I know he wants to talk in English. I ask him about the tides. It's hard to think of things to say. I've just swum from one Cambodian island to another, and I feel that sense of awe that, for me, is becoming increasingly synonymous with the country.

I do meet up with Sovann once more. When I return to Siem Reap, he takes me to Kulen Mountain to show me Kbal Spean, a riverbed that was carved with fertility symbols 900 years ago but wasn't discovered until 1969, and a huge reclining Buddha in a 16th-century monastery. Below it, I get my shoulders pounded under a powerful waterfall where tiny fish nip at my feet and a trio of Buddhist monks asks to take a photo with me. On the way back, there are locals selling purple bananas by the side of the road. A young man chops ice with a sword. Houses sit on

stilts because of flooding, and to provide an entire ground floor of shade.

I end my trip at the Belmond La Résidence d'Angkor on the Siem Reap River. I spend a lot of time in the pool that last day. Once in a while, a hibiscus drops from a tree and floats on the water's surface. The pool tiles are deep green, in the style of the best Asian resort pools, making the water looks jade or purple or inky, depending on the light. At one end, a stream emits from the mouth of a lion. The thriving jungle foliage surrounds the hotel's teak Khmer-style buildings, the sharply peaked roofs and deep eaves barely visible.

Ben Thorne told me that the Cambodians are a resilient people. "They look to the future," he said. I can see that's true. It's in Sol's desire to speak English and in the swimming lessons at Song Saa; it's in the foundation-run school on Koh Rong, where the students listen attentively to a no-nonsense teacher; it's in the kids who expertly performed five traditional narrative dances at La Résidence's Circle restaurant the night before; it's in the revelry on nearby Pub Street.

But the past exerts its compelling, inexorable pull. The kingdom is a place that is both emerging from the past—distant and recent—and protecting it. As I float under the plumeria and the red and white hibiscus trees, I'm amazed at how many times I encountered the resonance of an enduring tradition. I think of saffron robes and ritual bows and the trick-of-the-eye photo that Sovann took of me at Angkor Thom, when I was nose-to-nose with a history, a people, a culture carved in stone. ●



CAMBODIA'S RESORTS

View more images of luxurious accommodations in Cambodia, such as the Belmond La Résidence d'Angkor, Song Saa, and the Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor, in our tablet edition. Search "Cadillac Magazine" in the App Store or on Google Play.