

# TREELINE – A SANCTUARY OF ART AND NATURE

In the same street, just 2 kilometers to the South, another resort at Siem Reap River bank follows the green path to success. **Treeline Urban Resort** opened in November 2018 and, in some efforts, it even surpassed Jaya's almost impeccable no plastic score.

As soon as one arrives, it's clear that this place pays equal respect to the tradition and the contemporary. Just in front of the hotel, a tree wraps its roots around the old Khmer sculpture, in the same way that jungle swallowed the **Angkor Empire** temples, Siem Reap's prime tourism asset. Behind the entrance doors, a gigantic sculpture by **Sopheap Pich**, one of Cambodia's most prominent artists, marks the hotel foyer.

Generously sprinkled with greenery and art, in both rooms and common spaces, Treeline resembles a contemporary art museum curated by nature.

Overhanging plants giving an artistic frame and artworks using natural materials and Cambodian heritage as inspiration are parts of the same celebratory story. Treeline's owner and architect, 36-year-old **Hok Kang**, was inspired by the interplay between nature and civilization, and it speaks at every corner of this luxury resort.

Treeline is fostering the local art scene, but is equally involved in tree-planting and cleaning up Siem Reap, showing that the responsibility of a modern hotel exceeds the boundaries of a building. The town might be blessed by being a launching pad for **Angkor Wat**, one of the world's most famous touristic sites, but if the destination management ignores the plastic pollution, the negative branding will radically damage everyone's results.



In front of the Treeline – the atmosphere of Angkor temples wrapped in jungle

# QUEST FOR PLASTIC ALTERNATIVES

“Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean.” The quote from Treeline’s hotel directory might sound cheesy. But two years after Jaya’s revolutionary practices hit Siem Reap, the high tide of industry players who invested in conscious travel and created stunning results proved that ecological strategy was based in reason, not in romantic dreams.



Treeline's infinity pool wrapped in plants

From the outside, it could have been just a trendy hotel with a fantastic rooftop infinity pool, two restaurants, and **Brown Café**, Cambodia’s version of the **Starbucks**. Inside, there was much more than just serving guests’ hedonism needs.

Treeline’s rooms came with a complimentary mini bar, including the free filtered drinking water in sanitized glass bottles. The free welcome package included dry fruit snacks in glass jars and even M&Ms!

The hotel paid great attention to sourcing products from sustainable and ethical local suppliers. Eggs at breakfast came from the happy chickens. Custom cushions came from the zero waste fashion brand **Tonlé**. Essential oils at **Suri Spa**, where I received a great massage, were extracted and blended from locally grown organic botanicals. The solar heating system supplied hot water.



Treeline's yard could equally belong to a botanical garden and to some contemporary art museum

“I need to believe in what I’m doing! It needs to align with my personal values!”, **Joni Aker**, Treeline’s general manager, told me when I asked about the hotel owners’ support. “If I was not going to be supported in being eco-friendly, eliminating plastics, taking care of the environment, using natural products, and supporting the local community, I knew I couldn’t be part of a project that did not share these values. Within minutes of meeting the hotel owners, I knew our values aligned and was blown away by their vision and principles.”

# STRATEGY FOR THE ECOLOGICAL SECOND THOUGHT

With yoga mat in my room, some of the best blackout curtains I've ever had pleasure sleeping behind, and the friendliness of the staff who remembered my name, the tea and the juice I liked, it was easy to be seduced. Treeline seemed to cater for all guests' needs, but with a strategy.

In bathrooms, only the essential amenities were offered (including cotton swabs, made of paper of course). In case that a guest requested additional amenities, he or she would be offered an eco-friendly pack with toothbrush, comb and razor – all made of wood! While it looked like a collectible, it was just following the principle that the number of items used would be smaller if the guests needed to request them at the reception. Supposedly, only 30 percent of Treeline guests request such a pack, so instead of investing into plastic amenities for everyone, serving eco-friendly version to those who really need it was not just an ecological, but also – an economical choice.



Treeline's nature-friendly alternative to the take-out lunch box and plastic-free bathroom amenities

On a larger scale, even some cities started to realize how much waste hotels produced. **Shanghai** authorities have introduced the policy that should be fining the hotels for offering disposable items to guests when they did not request them! The environmental campaign envisaged fines of 5.000 Yuan (640 Euros), hoping that this measure would support the reduction of garbage produced in the city.