

DESTINATION CHINA: ECO-TOURISM IS AVAILABLE FOR YOU TODAY



In a destination like China, the "green" concept has been hard to grasp due to amount of CO2 it emits into the environment. Moreover, most of the rivers and lakes in china are contaminated. This situation has led to widespread protests from environmentalists. Many people who have a knack for eco-tourism have not had any reason to head to this country till now. Let's to observe why.

Built among the tea plantations and bamboo forests in Zhejiang province is the Naked Retreats eco resort which is set on a 60 acre reserve. This resort is trying to get certified by the US Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Program. If it achieves this, it will be the first resort of its size in the country to get it. Smaller resorts have achieved platinum certification from this body, including the Red Capital Ranch and Yourantai Bed and Breakfast.

The Naked Stables is a brainchild of Grant Horsfield, who was inspired to build it due to the influence of his Chinese wife, Delphine Yip who comes from Hong Kong. This is not his first, as Grant also set up the Naked Home Village in 2007 which holds 8 homesteads in Moganshan. The couple uses these projects to keep their relations with neighbors by using local artisans and laborers during the construction. During the construction of the Naked Stables, the couple used more than 270 locals to complete the job.

So, what brought about the idea? Grant admits that the need to provide a place to act as a beauty spot for the people of shanghai so that they can get out of the city to enjoy an activity other than playing golf. The whole idea is themed around a South African atmosphere starting from the restaurant dishes and the furnishings. This has become popular with wealthy Chinese and expats who are after different experiences from what they are used to. Travellers from outside the country may not find it appealing because there is little portrayal of traditional China

The resort plans to organically produce 30% of its own products by the start of the summer. Various animals shall be reared including the native Sika deer. This endangered species is to be reared among the forest grounds.

The resort has several villas designed in different styles. Each villa has a persona butler. Cars are not allowed, with visitors encouraged to either walk or use buggies which are electrically operated. Other available activities are horse-riding, yoga, mountain hiking and kite-flying.

The design of the villas is to make them as energy efficient as possible. Insulation is provided by mud and insulation foam which is used in construction of the huts. This reduces the level of heating and cooling. The reserve recycles all its water. The villas start at \$460 each night and you have an option of selecting also from 3 and four bedroomed villas. The earth huts accommodate two people and go start at \$150 per night.

The resort at Moganshan gives you a perfect destination as an eco-tourist. You can stay in the European style farmhouses at \$35 a night for a single night per person or get a studio at \$106 for two people. If you are looking for fresh coffee, then the Moganshan Lodge is the perfect place for you. If you need a hideout for the day, Songliang Hotel will give you what you are looking for at

prices starting from \$28 a night.

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