

CONSERVATION

BANUBANU BEACH RETREAT, AUSTRALIA

Located on Bremer Island, Northern Territory, Banubanu Beach Retreat was the brainchild of Helen Martin and Trevor Hosie. The couple first came across the privately owned Aboriginal island while operating fishing charters back in the early 2000s. After securing permission from the traditional Yolngu clan of East Arnhem Land, construction of the eco-resort began in 2005, using local materials such as driftwood and discarded fishing nets recovered from the island's beaches. Martin shares, "When we initially applied to build Banubanu, the Indigenous community would only accept us on the understanding we were to create employment for future Yolngu generations to come – this has been our vision from the onset."

Today, the retreat boasts a prime beachfront location on an island measuring 16km². Without shops or roads, the resort's distinct appeal is the offer of complete solitude. Outfitted with re-crafted timber and decked out with sea-coloured pastels, the luxury safari tents enjoy panoramic views over the Arafura Sea. Hosie declares, "With its undiluted Aboriginal culture, pristine landscape and unspoilt fishing, this is Australia's last frontier."

“This is Australia’s last frontier”

From inception, both Martin (an Arrernte Aboriginal woman from Alice Springs) and Hosie (an ex-mapper of the Northern Territory) have been committed to sustainable living and operate the retreat mainly by solar power and rainwater. They have contributed to conserving the local turtle population by requesting the Yolngu to halt hunting; the result being that hundreds of turtles are now nesting year-round throughout the island. The couple also employ Aboriginal people to run traditional crabbing and fishing trips, giving guests the invaluable opportunity to connect with the world's oldest living culture.

Fourteen years on, the resort is thriving, with plans to build additional tents and a restaurant overlooking the bay – creating much-needed employment for the locally based Yolngu people. banubanu.com



SilkAir flies five times a week between Singapore and Darwin

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

GUESTS AT BANUBANU CAN LEARN TRADITIONAL CRABBING AND FISHING TECHNIQUES FROM THE LOCAL YOLNGU CLAN; THE RESORT HAS WORKED HARD TO PROTECT THE LOCAL TURTLE POPULATION; THE LUXURY SAFARI TENTS ARE OUTFITTED WITH RE-CRAFTED TIMBER



Words by LYNN GAIL