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To whom it may concern

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## **"Zeavola Resort" was introduced in the Internet magazine.**

We are pleased to introduce that "Zeavola Resort", a luxury resort in Phi Phi Island, Thailand owned by our group, has been introduced on "World Oyster", a travel internet magazine.

The original article can be found at the link below.

<https://magazine.wideoyster.com/en/travel-hero-florian-hallermann/>

In recent years, Zeavola Resort has been highly regarded as an eco-resort and has received various awards. This is an interview with hotel general manager Mr. Florian Hallermann about the sustainability challenge he has been working on for over 10 years since joining our group.

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As more and more voices are shouting that travel is bad for the environment. We believe that travel done right can be a tool in conserving this beautiful rock we live on. We'd like to shed a light on travelers who have been giving everything to preserve the planet. In the words of David Attenborough: "No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced." In this edition: Florian Hallermann, general manager of the sustainable Zeavola Eco-Resort on Koh Phi Phi in Thailand.

Fifteen years ago I met Florian Hallermann during one of my adventures in Thailand, we spent a great evening talking about tourism and I already noticed how engaged he was when we got to the topic: plastics. Little did I know that we would meet again on Koh Phi Phi. This time under a parasol on a tropical beach in a paradise called Zeavola Eco-Resort. 30 years ago Florian took a plane from Vienna to Asia, saw paradise and never left. In 2008 he became the general manager of Zeavola



Resort, and he is now in his 11th year there. Zeavola Resort is based on a traditional southern Thai village and the tag-line is “Back to Simplicity”, while providing barefoot luxury with personalised service. The hotel is rated number one on Tripadvisor on Phi Phi Island!



**Why did you decide to convert Zeavola into an eco-friendly resort?**



I grew up in an eco friendly family so in the moment I arrived on Phi Phi island as the new general manager I looked for opportunities to make a difference. One of my pet peeves is the usage of plastic shampoo and amenity bottles, particularly when they bear the logo of the hotel. It’s bad practice and has a negative marketing effect. We changed to locally sourced ceramic bottles within the four months. This resulted in tremendous operational savings. In the last 11 years we prevented almost half a million plastic bottles being dumped.

## Could you describe shortly how you started?



Zeavola is in a very remote and beautiful location. Due to the fragile nature of its location, we all must really listen to the environment around us and allow nature to be our guide. Whenever something is mindlessly implemented, nature will present us a bill within 6- 9 months. Those bills turn out to be more expensive and counterproductive to the well being of the resort and its staff members. Also, it is vital that our team members have a fair and conducive work environment so they can reach their full



potential. It's not only nature which is important, but also the staff and local community needs to be taken care of as well. I was asked by the current hotel owner to create excellent working conditions, to be recognised as the leading employer in the region.

**“Nature does not need humanity. Humanity needs nature. There is no Planet B”**

## What challenges did you face while working on the sustainability project

The biggest challenge in those projects is a lack of exposure to the newest technology and practices. Since we are a single, fiercely independent resort we don't have a head office with a technical director. To keep up to date and find those technologies is difficult and requires an open mind and determination. Thankfully we have an extremely skilled engineering team, that just builds whatever we need.

Sometimes it's also pure luck. A returning guest Mr. Alexander Auer, a Swiss environmental business consultant saw the challenges that I faced with the waste water system and kindly provided all of the necessary technical plans from Europe. We built the system in line with local capabilities. The waste water is now so clean it hosts many fish.

## Did you ever start a project that did not work out?

In July 2018 we were finally able to implement homemade drinking water in reusable glass bottles. The period from planning to implementation was more than three years. In the first year we were too fast in building the bottle wash and refill station. Only afterwards we discovered that our water production capacity was not big enough. So, with a year delay and a huge investment of EUR 250,000 our reverse osmosis plant finally had the capacity to produce enough water. We discovered that we needed a secondary plant to ensure that the water has drinking quality. That was another year added to the time line. Finally we rated the system through one dry season as a trial, to ensure that we had enough water. We did in the fourth year. With a huge learning curve, setbacks, and large bills we succeeded.



**A very important Buddhist word is “Enough”. I think many western cultures have reached the point that enough is enough. It is now or never if humanity wants to create a future**

## How do you implement sustainability in a country that is mostly not acting green?

We involve all staff members in the process. We do not use single use plastic bottles and have gifted to each team member metal drink cups. We installed drinking water fountains in the back of the house and in the staff housing area. Whilst there are still plastic bottles around, they are always refilled thus saving expenses. And we also share pictures of the staff with their new bottles and drinking cups on social media. By giving them education and the tools and by creating fun moments the adoption process is quite encouraging and gives them a sense of pride.





### Do environmental initiatives impact your personal life too?

A very important Buddhist word is “Enough”. I think many western cultures have reached the point that enough is enough. It is now or never if humanity wants to create a future in which our kids can prosper safely and sustainably. If a small hotel, a small family or a single person can have a tremendous impact, then larger corporations can do it too, and having a bigger impact. I use cotton shopping bags and carry around reusable plastic containers when I buy take-out food in my favourite restaurants to avoid Styrofoam containers. I try to create zones in my garden so that birds can breed in safety. I’m also a keen kayaker and often travel long distances. When I return, I’m looking like a garbage truck full of plastic. My wife and I teach our children these very important life lessons. Help them to open their eyes and train them to do things right.



## Why is sustainable tourism so important?

It is more than important, it is essential. If humanity plans to be around for a while we all should start immediately. The times of sustainability being the hobby of the affluent countries are over. These affluent countries need stop polluting. They need to assist other countries with technologies, with targeted investment, without having profit as the constant motivator on their mind.

**“I am a keen kayaker and often travel long distances. When I return, my kayak looks like a garbage truck full of plastic”**



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