

PLANET OVER PROFITS

“For sustainability and sustainable actions to last, you need the economics to make it work,” explains William Kriegel, founder of Haras de la Cense, a stud farm and learning center for horsemanship that works closely together with Le Barn hotel, and is based outside of Paris. As climate change and environmental degradation become increasingly evident, the hospitality industry is placing sustainability at the core of its practices and committing to responsible, green practices. And yet, at the same time, the transportation sector and its CO₂ emissions are posing a greater risk to human health and wildlife habitats. Researchers have found that the tourism industry is responsible for eight percent of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide, contributing significantly to climate change and the acidification of the oceans. Kriegel is one of the many innovators in the hospitality industry who believes that the extraction economy is no longer feasible. “Bringing long-lasting economic life to the land and farming practices to thrive in the process is a natural, virtuous circle. When you start assessing things from a sustainability angle, you stop being in the extraction economy,” he explains. “One thing I have learnt over the years is that values and ideology can only be applied when they have an economic value.” With climate change an inescapable reality now, creating an ethical business model that respects the natural world might be our only way forward.

Wilderness Safaris is leading the charge in an effort to carve out new relationships with the land through conservation. While they run 48 luxury camps across seven countries on the African continent, the company contributes to the conservation of millions of acres of land across eight biomes. Founding partners Colin Bell and Chris McIntyre shed light on their sustainable model: “Within our industry, we have unquestionably the greatest positive impact on both rural communities and conservation.” Their biodiversity coverage covers 5.7 million acres, and includes 39 species in the three most threatened categories of the IUCN Red List. Furthermore, Wilderness Safaris runs 44 research projects tied to climate change, endangered species, and new environmental threats that arise every year, with an overarching goal “to ensure that eco-tourism remains the chosen alternative—in an economic sense—to less sustainable industries such as mining, extensive agriculture and farming, hydroelectric schemes, and others that irrevocably damage biodiversity, wilderness, and ecosystem processes.” A business that manages to be profitable, ethical, and responsible is a role model for similar businesses around the world.

When entrepreneurs and sustainability leaders Rory and Melita Hunter created Song Saa, an eco-resort on a private island in Cambodia, they developed a