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TAKING CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Phuket, Thailand, The Vijitt Resort opened its doors in September 2008 and as a 5 star resort it provides guests with every luxury. However there is a twist to this that makes The Vijitt Resort Phuket somewhere a little different. That 'twist' is the behind the scenes focus on the environment and the creation of a sustainable product.

The focus started even before the resort was created, its owners have tended and nurtured the land for over 70 years and when they decided to build the resort their initial brief was to maintain the integrity and respect what had been created by their ancestors.

This brief meant creating a resort that was in harmony with the surroundings rather than imposing itself upon the environment. Keeping as many of the trees as possible was a real mission, which in many cases involved moving and re-designing villas to incorporate or protect the trees.

The design and build of the villas makes them look as if the land has grown up around them, rather than the other way round, raw materials were, as a preference, sourced from Thailand, supporting the local communities and minimizing carbon emissions.

The resort has continued this throughout the operation, sourcing materials that are as much as possible locally produced and that are not harmful to the environment, the resort also runs a re-cycling programme, which is even extending to the guests by providing re-cycling bins around the resort and the resort also encourages staff to participate by bringing their own items to the resort to add to the programme, this way the resort is also helping the local community as many of the staff live close to the resort.

When it comes to guest activities the resort also takes it's CSR into consideration; offering guests choices of local cycling tours, visits to the local market, marine walks in during low tide where one can see marine life and corals in the shallow pools left at low time in front of the resort. The resort is also planning to launch a rubber processing programme, tapping the 'milk' from the rubber trees found on the plantation and introducing guests to the processing process, guests will even be able to make their own items and all the revenues from the programme will be used to support local community programmes.

As the resort's General Manager James Sullivan-Tailyour summarises *"In everything we do we try to question ourselves 'does this match with our Environmental policy' if not we don't do it. Guests can be sure we are constantly striving to ensure their stay's potential negative environmental impact is minimized and while they don't have to we do offer our guests the opportunity to get more actively involved with this process."*

What's next? *"Applying for the Green leaf accreditation and continuing the process, once you stop you are already slipping backwards"* Sullivan-Tailyour stated.

KEY FACTS:

Resort opening: September 2008
Cost of build: Bt550 million
Concept: Villa style with traditional southern style influences and a contemporary twist
Facilities: 92 Villas including 20 pool Villas
2 Restaurants, 3 Bars, Bakery and Ice Cream Parlor, Wine Cellar
Spa, Gym
Kid's Club
2 pools including the impressive 40 metre infinity Pool
Target group: Couples, honeymooners and families

-ENDS-

For further information contact:

James Sullivan-Tailyour, General Manager, The Vijitt Resort Phuket,
Telephone: (mobile) +66 (0) 81797 2234, email: gm@vijittresort.com

The Vijitt Resort Phuket

Friendship Beach,
16 Moo 2, Viset Road, T. Rawai, A. Muang, Phuket 83100 Thailand

Tel: +66 76 363 600 **Fax:** +66 76 363 699

Email: info@vijittresort.com **Website:** www.vijittresort.com

For reservations contact reservation@vijittresort.com

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