



GREEN SCHOOL

Bali is absolutely full of people pretending to do things, pretending to know things, and pretending to care about things. I have met far too many of them over the years. So when I first heard about Green School, I suppose some of that scepticism crept in there too. My natural suspicion of the "jewellery-designer-turned-eco-entrepreneur" came rushing to the fore and I reduced my expectations to the normal "There for the life story" Bali resident profile, says **Alistair Speirs**. However meeting the man himself on site and seeing what he has achieved and what is being planned was another story.

John Hardy was a highly successful jewellery designer, and has made Bali his home for the last thirty years. When he sold his jewellery company some years ago he dedicated himself to conservation with an emphasis on bamboo, and has now created a bamboo-based construction and design empire which is fascinating and cutting edge, and an astonishing school "Green School" where everyone else's dreams of an eco-education are made into his reality.

What I liked about John Hardy, as we traversed his "village" from PT bambu factory area to the school, was that he wasn't trying to impress me, he was explaining and analysing what was being achieved without feeling he had to make me his closest friend. Let the bamboo do the talking and it did.

I will return in a future issue to the whole bamboo design project which is worthy of a story in itself: in this story let's concentrate on Green School. Here's the outline from his own literature.

"It's mission is delivering a generation of global citizens who are knowledgeable about and inspired to take responsibility for the sustainability of the world by emphasising 'learning by doing', placing

great weight in developing social responsibility, appreciating integrity, honesty, ethics, and compassion as core underlying values; and recognising the importance of a holistic education.

Its curriculum develops the essential skills, of reading, writing, mathematics and science to a high degree; has a Green aspect which evolves from nature to ecology to environment to sustainability through a 'getting your hands dirty' and 'getting mud between your toes' approach; recognises and celebrates the local geographical and cultural and artistic context; and is based on continuity and progression.

And it has created a teaching and learning setting that embraces the environment using only natural and local resources in architecturally stunning bamboo structures; inspires a living sense of creative problem solving; continually explores the use of alternative clean energy; and seeks out scalable solutions to promote the longevity of the planet."

Too much? Actually no. But it was at the beginning of the school's development and in the words of Ronald Stones OBE known as Roni, the school director here's what happened. "Green School was trying to be all things to all people when it opened. We were offering

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academic rigour, we were offering International Baccalaureate, we were offering everything you could offer, which was unrealistic. Our teachers were from around the world, and they were bringing with them methodologies, patterns, belief systems that they held on to. Parents started pulling students out, teachers started leaving. And that was within three months of the School opening. Things had to change. We had to develop a focus. And the focus we chose was Green; we came back to the purpose of us being here every day."

SO WHAT IS GREEN SCHOOL TODAY? HERE'S WHAT RONI SAYS:

"Green School's campus spans nearly ten hectares on either side of the Ayung River. One of our iconic structures is a stunning bamboo bridge that spans the river and is emblematic of what we aim to achieve at Green School: connecting learning with creativity, environmental responsibility with scientific knowledge; respect for self with respect for the many cultures represented in and around the School.

As we develop a Green curriculum and Green enterprises, students will have more and more exposure to learning practical



ways of looking after, and making the most of the environment. This learning will inform and empower them to become leaders of their communities and fore-runners in the environmental stewardship that the planet so desperately needs.

Green School's uniqueness is further enhanced by our interaction with, and access by the communities of the local Balinese villages which surround us. 20% of our students are Balinese children who attend Green School through a generous scholarship program. We are grateful to be able to draw upon the cultural richness of Bali and Indonesia."

I can only agree. Walking round the school, uncovering innovation after innovation (the latest being the vortex hydro generator) you can't help but be impressed, and when you stand in "Heart of School" the main building you can indeed see what John Hardy was aiming for. It is an inspiring building, the tropical equivalent of a gothic cathedral, the school that Swiss Family Robinson would have built. It is amazing.

So will it work? Here we turn to Roni Stones again, "I think in the future Green School may be the kind of school that parents will say 'Let's send you for a year or two to Green School to have that experience' and it could be the pre-university years. Good universities nowadays, certainly in the western world, are not just looking for 'A' students, you've got to have something extra. Especially the Oxford-Cambridge people they want something very different. Well, you can't get much different than the Green School. I've done three headships of international schools in Southeast Asia—British School in Manila, British International School in Jakarta, Tanglin Trust School in Singapore. I've had to reinvent myself to come to this. I believe this is the future of education."

Impressive and practical, I like the commitment and the direction "the global model of sustainable education." This story deserves to be in this issue and it deserves your attention, now.

Have a look at the website and see more. Well done to all concerned. contact: www.greenschool.com