



Patience, Passion and Commitment

The Hotel Manager of Hansar Samui, Mr. Urip N Wiedodo, spoke with Dennis Latif about his work and life, interests, current issues and of course the beautiful island of Samui.

Photo courtesy of Hansar Samui

You obtained hospitality degrees from several prestigious tourism institutes, graduating with honours. What has made you interested in pursuing a career in the hospitality industry?

Well, I grew up and became familiar with hospitality (hotels) as my father also worked at a hotel; whenever he came back from work, there was always an interesting story he shared, and most were funny. Some were about guest complaints or compliments, others about the staff and operational matters and others about technical matters.

I started to think, "It could be very interesting to work in a hotel". Time passed and indeed I ended up working in a hotel, which is not that bad after all.

Every field must have their own stresses, challenges and difficulties but being able to work together with staff as a team and be able to achieve the same goal goes beyond job satisfaction. Every day is different and you never get bored! In the hospitality industry you also have a chance to travel (my favourite), especially if you're working for a large hotel company with properties all over the world:

transferring to other locations is easy and having experience abroad in other cultures will broaden your horizons.

You have experienced many different working environments in many cities: how has this helped you in developing Hansar Samui?

It is always exciting to start a new life in a new different place with new people and a unique culture; you need time to learn about them before adapting your past experiences to new situations, which I call challenges. I think the key to success is to overcome all challenges with patience, passion and commitment, as well good team-working, which I learned from previous jobs.

You have stayed in Thailand for quite some time. Please share with us your opinion about the hospitality industry in Thailand nowadays. How do you see Hansar Samui in the future?

Thailand has always been a popular tourism destination compared with other Southeast Asian nations. A well-established infrastructure and strong market penetration makes Thailand the place to be. A number of initiatives from the government as well as the Thailand Tourism Authority are still in the pipeline to upgrade the tourism industry.

There are many top five-star hotels that provide excellent service with a Thai cultural nuance, which is one of the secrets of our success. Despite the political turmoil of the past 7 months, Thailand's tourism has shown strong performance, which may not have happened in other countries. I believe people know that Thailand is still the place for them to go. However, the political situation has hit some parts of the hospitality industry hard, as many hotels suffered a significant drop in occupancy, with listlessness in other hospitality sectors.

Hansar Samui is part of Hansar Hotels and Resorts Group. Having successfully established its first two hotels over the last three years, Hansar will add three

boutique properties in Thailand to its brand over the next 18 months. They currently have two award-winning properties; Hansar Bangkok (94 suites) in the upscale Rajdamri Road area and Hansar Samui (74 rooms), a beachfront property in trendy, upmarket Bophut Bay. Hansar Hotels & Resorts are independently owned and operated.

The three new properties are:
Hansar Pranburi (17 rooms), open in April 2014
Hansar Khao Yai (39), scheduled to open in second quarter of 2014
Hansar Cha-am (104), scheduled to open fourth quarter of 2014.

The three were recently acquired by Hansar Hotels & Resorts and are currently undergoing remodelling to Hansar's exacting brand standards. These include unique, tasteful design features and ensuring that each property, while having a distinct identity, is integrated into the culture and locale of the hotel, whether it is in a city, beach or country location.

Great attention is given to detail, using natural, sustainable materials that are locally sourced. It is important that guests enjoy luxury and comfort as well as functionality during their stay at Hansar properties. Despite Hansar being extremely proud to focus our local expansion within Thailand, we are also starting to look at opportunities in Southeast Asia countries such as Indonesia.

What makes Hansar Samui special? What kind of experiences will guests enjoy during a stay at the resort?

As part of Hansar Hotels and resorts, Hansar Samui can be classified as a top player in the island among all the big boys. In a bid to be different, we have created our unique concept from the vision of our Chairman as a world traveller, who has found that many cities with their thousands of hotel rooms still lacked a hotel that offered what the modern-day traveller needs in terms of convenience, value, service and privacy. Although the Hansar Group is an investor in businesses beyond hotels, its priorities have

always been focused on exceeding the expectations of its customers so that future business will be guaranteed.

Philosophy: The inspiration for Hansar comes from the lively and generous spirit of Thai culture. The word "Hansar" means "joy and happiness".

Hallmarks of the Hansar Brand: A Thai heart beats at the centre of the Hansar experience, offering genuine, personalized, unpretentious service in the tradition of Thai hospitality, tailored to each guest's needs. Spacious, contemporary rooms are a hallmark of the brand, as is attractive pricing, thereby delivering great value to guests. Food and beverage offerings are exquisite in both setting and quality. What drives Hansar is the passion for excellence – in each detail and for each guest. As ambassadors of our brand, our staff live and breathe the Hansar lifestyle in every undertaking – filling your stay with the joy promised in its name.

Awards: In the three years Hansar Hotels & Resorts have operated they have won a number of awards, including: Best Hotel Thailand by the Asia Pacific Hotel Awards 2012 (UK), Best City Hotel 2011 and Best Beach Hotel 2012 by the Boutique Hotel Awards (UK), Platinum Award 2011-2013 Top 10 Spa in Asia, Conde Nast Traveller's Hot List and Hot Spa 2012 (USA) and TripAdvisor's Traveller's Choice Award Winner 2012 (USA), World Luxury Best Resort 2014, World Best Luxury City Hotel 2014 and World Best Luxury Spa Award 2014.

How do you describe Koh Samui?

I think Koh Samui is a niche destination, with many attractions including the beach, marine activity spots, tourist markets ideal for evening strolls, and of course it's famous for its parties. In the past five years, Koh Samui has shown amazing growth in its hospitality industry. It is not a cheap place to visit; however, it is a place for people looking for a quality destination within Thailand. 