



JUNGLE trips

★ JUNGLE TRIPS ★
ISSUE 05
BRASIL

2009-2010
FREE
A JUNGLE TRIPS MAGAZINE

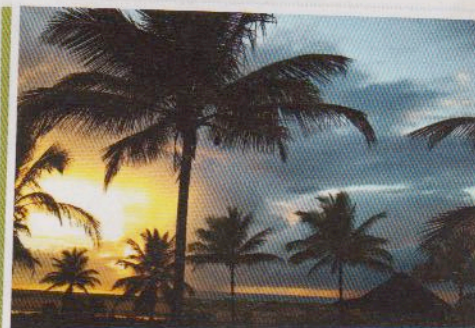
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GREEN DREAMS COME TRUE

PHOTOGRAPHER JOÃO VIANNA TALKS ABOUT WHY HE PACKED UP AND MOVED TO AN ECO-VILLAGE - AND HASN'T LOOKED BACK

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY JOÃO VIANNA

Being close to nature has also always warmed my soul, and that's what led me to become a nature photographer. For years I've been travelling to some of the most beautiful places in Brasil, where I've found communities living completely at one with their environment, which provides sustainable sources of food, energy and construction material for them. I took a course in permaculture (ethical living), and I realised how many habits I still had to change in order to reduce my impact on the environment. So I decided to pack things up and move to an eco-village, with my partner.

The Piracanga Eco Village is located on the Maraú peninsula, within 50 hectares of Atlantic Forest. Thanks to expert knowledge and technology, creating a complex these days with renewable energy, ecological houses, organic plants and community centres was the least of the problems. The real challenge is putting people together in this environment, and

learning how to deal with, and respect our differences.

We lead a simple way of life, rising early, eating healthily, and dedicating time to spirituality, and to teaching our children.

We are able to see the "system" for what it is, and free ourselves from the conditioning and bad habits we've acquired, and to plan the way we live and the way we treat the environment around us, in a healthier and more constructive way.

One of the principles of permaculture is to create connections between the elements. With our rubbish, for example, we separate food leftovers for making compost, which becomes a fertiliser for our plants, and comes back to our table as food. The waste water from the bathroom and kitchen goes to the banana plantations, which give us organic bananas. Transforming the "production line" into "productive cycles" is one of the ways we can deal efficiently with the leftovers from all parts of our homes.

In the Human Development Centre, we have events such as meditation and yoga, therapy, spiritual retreats and also events on sustainability. The centre is open to the public, who can take part as volunteers, or whilst staying here to see how an eco-village works.

Almost half the community is made up of children. We try to get them involved in a range of social activities from a young age, and this year we inaugurated the Piracanga Free School. The school has educational principles based on a spiritual and sustainable life. The project also has a social side, and that's why we have the school open to all children who seek and need our help and support.

We have learnt from life that those who have the means should help those who need it. We believe that every human being has a mission in life, and we want to support each child in that mission. ✦

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