

# PHA TAD KE

*Botanical Garden*

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**PRESS RELEASE - June 2017**

**The First Botanical Garden in Laos Opened November 2016**

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Since the opening from the Pha Tad Ke Botanical Garden to the public on November 7<sup>th</sup> 2017, over five thousand people from Laos and all over the world visited and enjoyed the beautiful as well as the educational. Founded by curator and publisher, Rik Gadella, Pha Tad Ke is located in Luang Prabang and is the first garden of its kind in Laos. It has taken seven years of developing botanical collections, scientific research, landscaping, and employee capacity building to create this unique botanical garden with a deep focus on ethno-botany.

Showing the Flora of Laos, a verdant oasis of gingers, orchids, ferns, bamboos, and palms is clustered around the base of the stunning rocky Pha Tad Ke cliff looming over the Mekong River. So peaceful that it could be deep in the wilds of Lao, it is only 15 minutes on the Pha Tad Ke boat from our downtown reception in World-heritage listed Luang Prabang, with its picturesque temples and colourful markets.

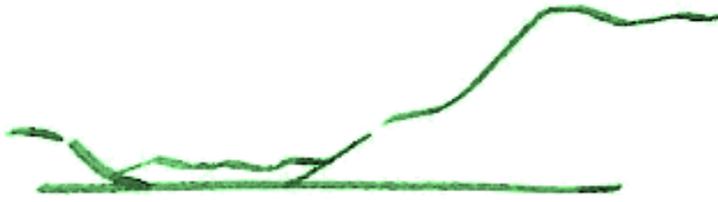
The centrepiece of Pha Tad Ke is a series of ethno-botanic gardens. Focusing on the relationship between Lao people and their plants, these gardens showcase plants used in medicine, handicraft, spiritual ceremonies as well as medicinal plants for elephants. The potential of this collection, much of which is yet unstudied, is immense. Although the traditional knowledge of the ethnic minorities about the plants in rural Laos is extensive, it is passed down orally, making it vulnerable to the pressures of development and very much in need of conservation and further in-depth study.

Pha Tad Ke is setting new standards in sustainable and environmentally responsible tourism, giving back to Lao communities, preserving local culture and the environment. The garden provides jobs to local villagers and creates a nurturing platform for young talent to develop new skills from gardening to science, education and hospitality. Publications and manuals in Lao language have been written by the staff and provide learning opportunities for Lao communities through workshops and student trainings.

The Pha Tad Ke café overlooks lush lotus ponds and features lounging couches, poetry books, and delectable teas. In collaboration with Lao chef, Seng Luangrath from Thip Khao restaurant in Washington DC the team has developed a menu that pushes the limits of traditional Lao food to full flavour capacity and visual appeal with seasonally changing, creative and healthy Asian dishes. The shop presents locally sourced handicrafts, as well as Lao food products, herbal teas and beauty products.

In collaboration with international botanical partner gardens such as the Queen Sirikit Botanic Garden in Chiang Mai, the Singapore Botanic Garden and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, solid inroads into research, education and conservation programs have been made. With the opening to the public of the first phase of the gardens this November, Pha Tad Ke will offer the public a great opportunity to learn more about the vital importance of biodiversity and ecological conservation in Laos.

Please join us for serene, leisurely enjoyable and educational half and full day tours through our scientific nurseries and beautifully presented gardens, or just come to relax and enjoy a delicious meal in our café.



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## **Here's some of what we have achieved, in numbers, since we began our project to create the first botanical garden in Laos in 2008:**

- 14 books published;
- 30,000 copies of our books distributed free of charge to Lao schools and libraries;
- 2,000 school children have visited PTK as part of organized garden excursions, and over 800 university and college students;
- 12 school gardens installed with teacher training programs;
- 120 plus botanical fieldtrips undertaken;
- 1,500 different plant and tree species in our living collections;
- 2,500 staff training days organized in Laos and over 900 staff training days completed internationally;
- 8 scholarships given to Lao students;
- 68 workshops given to Lao college and university students in Field botany, Green horticulture, Ecology, Management coaching, Photography and Botanical Drawings;
- 22 art exhibitions organized in Laos and internationally;
- 32 articles in the press, 17 blogs, 5 radio interviews and 3 TV documentaries featuring PTK;
- 52 staff working in the garden;
- 10 hectares of garden open to the public, 2 hectares of work area/nurseries and 25 hectares of mountain reserve.