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SPRING/SUMMER 2025

STEFANO RICCI

STEFANO RICCI  
E X P L O R E R

WITH  
STEVE MCCURRY



*“Don’t reject the crooked road and don’t take the straight one. Instead take the one travelled by the ancestors”.*

Bathed in the sunrise at Beng Mealea, my mind still moved by the sacred dance of the Apsara women performed in the darkness of the Preah Khan temple, I chose this Cambodian proverb to convey the essence of SR Explorer – Mission Cambodia. As we began planning this trip for SR Issue N°5, the latest instalment our Collector’s Edition, I envisioned sharing this adventure with my brother Niccolò and our strong team.

When this project was first conceived, I was inspired by the images taken by a legend in the world of photography: Steve McCurry. Working with him in the Khmer temples, in the jungle and on the waters that converge on the Mekong River represents so much more than an experience; it has been an essential life chapter.

This expedition is an emotional voyage, touching upon an unmatched heritage, uncovering a culture that dates back to the Middle Ages, yet still speaks to us through its architecture, sculptures, and the remarkable phenomenon of nature reclaiming its dominion over ancient ruins.

Our exploration stretched from Bong Chhouk Lake to Kulen Elephant Forest, a sanctuary for elephants retiring from a lifetime of work, before journeying along the Mekong River and ending at the luxurious Shinta Mani Wild.

Cambodia is a land of ancient emotions. It evokes a sense of familiarity as if we had visited these places before in another lifetime. Cambodia’s essence is captured in the travel diaries of Pierre Loti, Henri Mouhot, and Somerset Maugham in his work, “The Gentleman in The Parlour.” Our project’s commitment to sustainability includes planting 5,000 trees to help restore parts of the forest, encouraging the return of native wildlife. This effort is complemented by educational programs aimed at ensuring that future generations are proud of their roots.

Cambodia was chosen not just for the beauty it offers to the eye, but for the deeper exploration it promises to the soul, a notion best captured in the words: “Explore the world to explore ourselves”.

Filippo Ricci



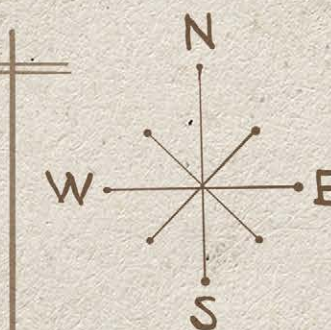


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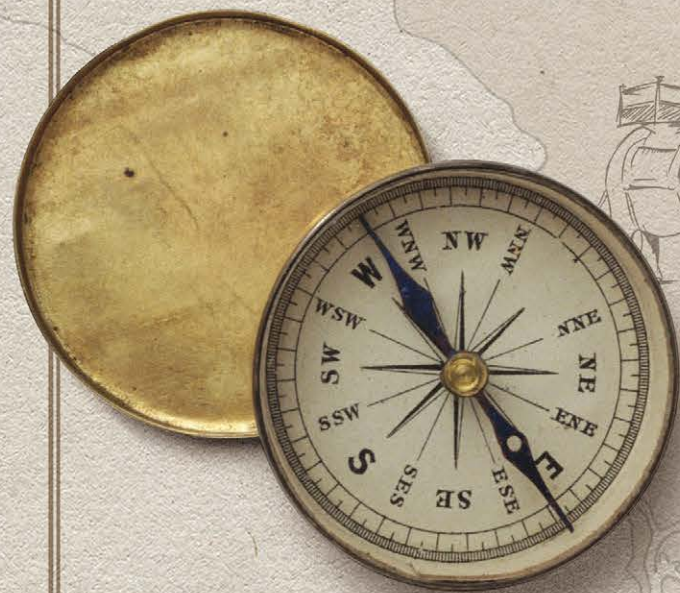
STEFANO RICCI  
EXPLORER



# STEFANO RICCI EXPLORER



FIRENZE



GULF  
OF  
SIAM

EXPEDITION N. **5** EXPECTED DATES 17/23 April '24

REASON FOR EXPLORATION **Spring-Summer  
2025 Collection**

0 35 70 mi  
0 35 70 km

Song Saa Reserve  
Bong Chhouk Lake

Preah Khan  
Bayon Temple  
Ta Prohm

Kulen Elephant  
Forest

Beng Mealea

SIEM  
REAP

Angkor Wat

Tonlé Sap

FLR

PHNOM PENH

Cardamom  
National Park

Shinta Moni Wild  
River

Sihanoukville  
Airport

LAOS

VIETNAM

Explore the world to explore ourselves



# STEFANO RICCI E X P L O R E R

WITH  
STEVE McCURRY

MISSION CAMBODIA  
SPRING/SUMMER 2025







# Cambodia, Land of the Gods

Filippo Ricci

*Creative Director, Stefano Ricci S. p. A.*

A small boat floats down the shores of the Mekong River. Originating in China, the sacred river weaves through Burma carving the border between Laos and Cambodia, as it meanders through the Golden Triangle before merging with the sea in the Vietnamese delta. It is time to leave, and yet a sense of melancholy creeps in, making me realise in an instant that I am to be forever entwined within this complex tapestry of emotions. It reminds me that I've been here before, in some distant and undefined time.

As I leaf through the fading pages of my travel notebook, I am revisited by the memories I collected from each corner of the world. Luxor, Iceland, the Galapagos, Mongolia. While it feels like an eternity away, each mission and experience that I have made has left something with me: knowledge, new meetings, and personal stories.

As the fifth SR Explorer mission draws to a close, I emerge from this experience enriched in both humanity and spirituality.

I am proud of the team that has joined these expeditions. They, together with my brother Niccolò, have shared a journey of discovery following the beaten path carved by the history of the great Khmer people. This path has been traversed for centuries by Chinese travellers, French missionaries, and British officials. As Tiziano Terzani eloquently put it, it is a realm inhabited by phantoms.

I smile when I think about how much work goes on behind the scenes of each production. The collection design, the fabric manipulation, and the program planning. I am grateful that Terry has stood by our side, as he is a legend in the world of exploration. Furthermore, it is Gianluca's unwavering determination that enabled our concepts, images, and ideas to come together on that December day. As we gathered around our laptops, sharing images and brainstorming, we managed to connect with Steve, to narrate his story, and to weave together the pages you're about to delve into.



“Here and there  
on a bas-relief  
that miraculously  
remained in  
place are the  
dancers veiled in  
lichen [...].  
For centuries  
nature has  
continued its  
battle against  
the hand of man  
[...].”

*Henri Mouhot,  
19<sup>th</sup> century  
Naturalist and  
Explorer*



Ta Prohm Temple. Steve McCurry and Filippo Ricci  
on the set of SR Explorer – Mission Cambodia.

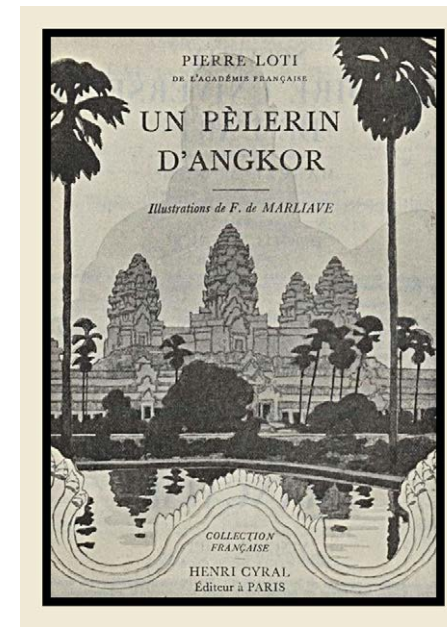
When I first started thinking about the Explorer project, I knew that I had to dare to take risks and explore the uncharted territories of the unknown. After Luxor, I couldn’t envision approaching it any differently. I knew that my aim was to tell a story through images, captured through the lens of a world renowned photographer. Cambodia beckoned to us, patiently waiting. It had always been there, ready to be discovered.

The new collection was inspired by four elements: water, stone, nature, and life.  
Here are my notes.

The waters of Tonle Sap, known as the “great river”, flow south of the ancient capital, Siem Reap, serving as the life blood of Cambodia. Extending through five provinces, this expansive waterway reaches all the way to the capital, forming the largest freshwater basin in Southeast Asia during the rainy season.

The guide who accompanies us explains that the water depth suddenly rises from 2 to 10 metres. Forests become swamps and entire floating villages drift along with the force of mother nature. This habitat hosts a wide variety of fish, attracting countless pelicans, marabous, ibis, and storks. It’s one of nature’s many gifts. A spectacle that unfolded cyclically since the dawn of time. UNESCO has defined it as the “biosphere reserve”. Time seems to stop as I observe the laborious daily routines of these extraordinary people and I am welcomed by the proverbial warmth of the Cambodian smile. I consider it a privilege to visit these places, knowing that soon the currents will recede, displacing this universe by many kilometres, only to return it to this exact starting point once the rainy season concludes.

The second element is the stone featured in the majestic temples, of which we possess little knowledge. As with every mission, our research begins in the library. However, true understanding is forged through lived experiences, not merely through virtual representations. The development of AI presents formidable challenges, ones we may yet hesitate to confront, but it cannot quench our thirst for genuine knowledge. There is no such thing as a comfortable life; the resilience to adapt and maintain independence is what defines our spirit.



The cover of *Un pèlerin d'Angkor* by  
Pierre Loti published in 1931.

And so, to visually measure the greatness of the Khmer civilization I looked to Banteay Srei, *the women’s fortress*, dedicated to the god Shiva. It was built in the 10<sup>th</sup> century by Yajnyavahara, a counselor to king Rajendravarman. A red sandstone triumph, thirty kilometres away from Angkor. I was enchanted by the thought of how, in the Middle Ages, the stylistic features and sophistication of an art that survives forever were defined by expert hands. Decorations, floral motifs, all finely sculpted.

In my quest to visually gauge the grandeur of the Khmer civilization, my gaze fell upon Banteay Srei, *the women’s fortress*, dedicated to the deity Shiva. It was built in the 10<sup>th</sup> century by Yajnyavahara, a counsellor to King Rajendravarman. A red sandstone triumph, thirty kilometres away from Angkor. I marvelled at the craftsmanship of the Middle Ages, where skilled artisans immortalized their artistry through intricate stylistic features and sophisticated designs. Every detail, from the meticulously sculpted decorations to the delicate floral motifs, spoke volumes about the enduring legacy of Khmer culture.

In comparison to the better-known Angkor Wat, Banteay Srei stands as a hidden gem, nestled perfectly amidst the green beauty of the jungle. Rediscovered in 1914, it tragically fell victim to thieves, becoming embroiled in *the Affaire Malraux*—an intriguing saga that dominated the headlines of 1924, a century ago. A young André Malraux, accompanied by his wife and assistant, sought to profit by removing bas-reliefs to sell to a collector, only to face arrest. Malraux’s pursuit had been ignited by reports of an archaeological discovery dating back to the years preceding the Great War—a forgotten treasure, now abandoned once more to the silent law of the jungle”. Together they purchased two first class tickets to Cambodia with the last money of a life spent paying no mind to savings. In his suitcase, everything was white, from his clothes to his shoes, prompting Clara’s playful exclamation that “snow had fallen” within. Clara’s luggage, in contrast, contained a hunting jacket and riding boots. He wore a colonial helmet; she a grey felted hat.

Having arrived in the land of search and exploration, they entered the jungle, sipping Pernod to combat the heat. After abandoning their vehicle, they journeyed on horesback, followed by carts pulled by grey buffaloes. Inside the carts, there were camphorated chests. It took three days to reach the moss-adorned temple, Banteay Srei. In just a couple of days, they managed to load seven “stolen princesses” into their possession.

As Christmas approached aboard the ship bound for Phnom Penh, their slumber was abruptly interrupted by a commotion. Police officials had opened their crates. Malraux and his wife didn’t understand. “I shouldn’t have worried, they had found in our coffers fragments of an almost collapsed temple that no one had been interested in for years,” he later remarked. Their detention, first in a hotel and then in a hospital due to Clara’s anorexia attack, gave them time to reflect.

Clara managed to secure her release and swiftly returned to France. Upon her arrival, she rallied the support of cultural luminaries to advocate for her beloved. From that adventure, *The Way of Kings* was born. One of the volumes we relied on to try to better understand Cambodia. I couldn’t help but smile in my office when I realized that Malraux would later become Minister of Culture in De Gaulle’s France.

It is true. There is no future if you are not aware of history.

And historians state that Indochina was the arena of the Khmer civilization, on par with the Egyptian and Roman eras.

The temples of Angkor, scattered in an area of 300 kilometers squared between



“Their hands were rare  
and beautiful orchids.  
There was no abandon  
in their dance: hieratic  
attitude and formal  
movements.

They were like idols who  
had come to life but  
imbued in divinity.”

*William Somerset  
Maugham, writer*



Preah Khan Temple, Robam-Tep Apsara, one of the national symbols of Cambodia. Apsara represent an important motif in the stone bas-relief of the Angkor temple. They wear a Sampot Sarabap, a type of silk brocade that is intricately pleated in the front. Mystical shot by Filippo Ricci.





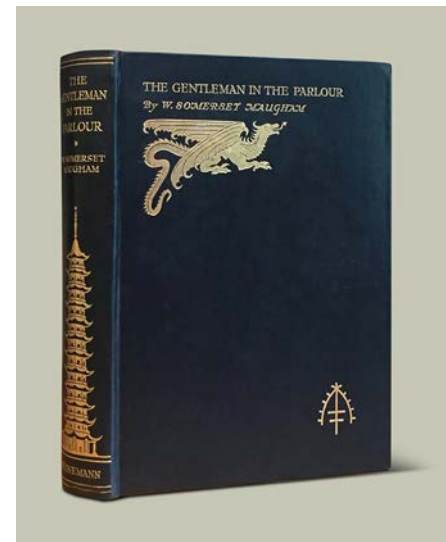
Bong Chhouk Lake. The fisherman in the lake. Photo by Filippo Ricci.

the Kulen mountains and Tonle Sap Lake, are here to tell us a story. But if the world knows Angkor Wat, the most imposing of the “state temples” (built to celebrate both God and the king), with cob-shaped towers and galleries dug into the laterite, the SR Explorer Man seeks something else in a land that around the 10<sup>th</sup> century had over a million inhabitants while London and Paris barely had a hundred thousand.

It is only here that one truly comprehends nature’s cyclical rhythm. It’s not about disturbing the roots of centuries-old trees. For here, akin to ancient tombs, resides the wisdom of a great people: granting nature the capacity to reclaim its creation.

I have read Pierre Loti’s “A Pilgrimage to Angkor”, a book that has influenced more than others the perception of the beauty of this paradise. Published in 1912, this work was read by Malraux before millions of people in the following decades would start dreaming of these exotic atmospheres. Loti landed here in 1901 in search of the Khmer city, moved by the fantasies of someone who, as a teenager, leafed through a colonial magazine. His diary constituted the initial bone structure of our itinerary. His book was more relevant than “A Journey to the ruins of Angkor”, by Henri Mouhot, to whom the world of research owes a lot, however we must acknowledge that the true father of this “rediscovery” was the monk Emille Bouillevaux, who had presented a contrasting narrative in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The fact remains, however, that the real gem turned out to be the concise writing of William Somerset Maugham in, *The gentleman in the Parlour* (1930), published in London and shortly after in 1963 debuted in Italy thanks to the translation by Luciano Bianciardi. The journey that Maugham undertook from London to Ceylon dates back to 1922, at the same time as Malraux’s misadventure. He traveled from Rangoon (Myanmar) to Hipong (Vietnam), At times by river, on the back of a mule, through and between mountains and forests up to Bangkok, before getting on a boat towards Cambodia, and before losing himself among the mysterious



The first edition of “*The Gentleman in the Parlour*” by W. Somerset Maugham. The author records in this book a journey from Rangoon to Haiphong which he made (this is its outstanding feature) without any reason. He went by river to Mandalay; on horse through the mountains and forests of the Shan States to Bangkok; by sea to Haiphong. What gives the greatest charm to this account is the fact that he made the whole journey in the mood of which Hazlitt said: “It is great to shake off the trammels of the world and public opinion... and become the creature of the moment...and to be known by no other title than ‘The Gentleman in the Parlour.’”

temples. His books, his story, are of a man who, before becoming a writer, had worked in hospitals dedicating his attention to the personal history of patients. This experience proved invaluable when he was selected to serve as an observer on behalf of Her Majesty’s secret services. He who dined around the world, rubbing elbows with Ernest Hemingway and James Dos Passos.

The third element is Mother Nature, which is found everywhere in Cambodia. Her forests merge into jungles, while her waters and animals live on in the fantasy of collective memories. I think about the elephants who have borne the brunt of exploitation in recent decades. I was struck by the story of the Elephant Sanctuary, where these gentle giants begin to regain their rhythms and which Niccolò will discuss later.

What can be said about Phnom Penh, the proud capital of an equally proud people? It stands as a testament to the fusion of history, heritage, and modernity, epitomizing the dynamism of one of the most vibrant countries in this corner of the globe.

It is time to leave again. My eyes and heart carry with them the remnants of wisdom gleaned from the adventures of great explorers.

In his notebook, Pierre Loti writes simple yet eternal thoughts: the “imposing ruins in the thick forests of Siam”, the “strange tall towers hugged all over by climbing leaves”. Who hasn’t fallen in love with these evocative words? “In the depths of the Siam Forest I have seen the evening star rise on the ruins of Angkor. Or in the empty spaces, marshes invaded by water lilies, tiara-shaped towers. I also found myself thinking, “Where did the palaces arise? Where did those incredibly sumptuous rulers live who we no longer know anything about?” I did so while admiring the “roots that look like hairstyles, draped with a thousand fringes.” We all looked into each other’s eyes and breathed in the atmosphere with “the volutes, the foliage of the capitals, the arabesques - how to explain it - seem like those that appeared here under Francis I or the Medici”.

At the beginning of the century, foreign travelers had already visited Cambodia. In 1586 a Portuguese friar, Antonio da Magdalena, left a report to the geographer Diogo do Couto.

Thirty years later, the historian Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola described Angkor as “known to all pagans as Rome is to Christians”. In 1789, the translation of a travel diary that the Chinese Zhang Daguean had written at the end of the thirteenth century appeared. While I am not a scholar, what strikes me is the contemplation of “how many generations have succeeded one another here over the centuries that history will probably never talk about”.

Before closing my SR notebook, I revisit Somerset Maugham’s words:

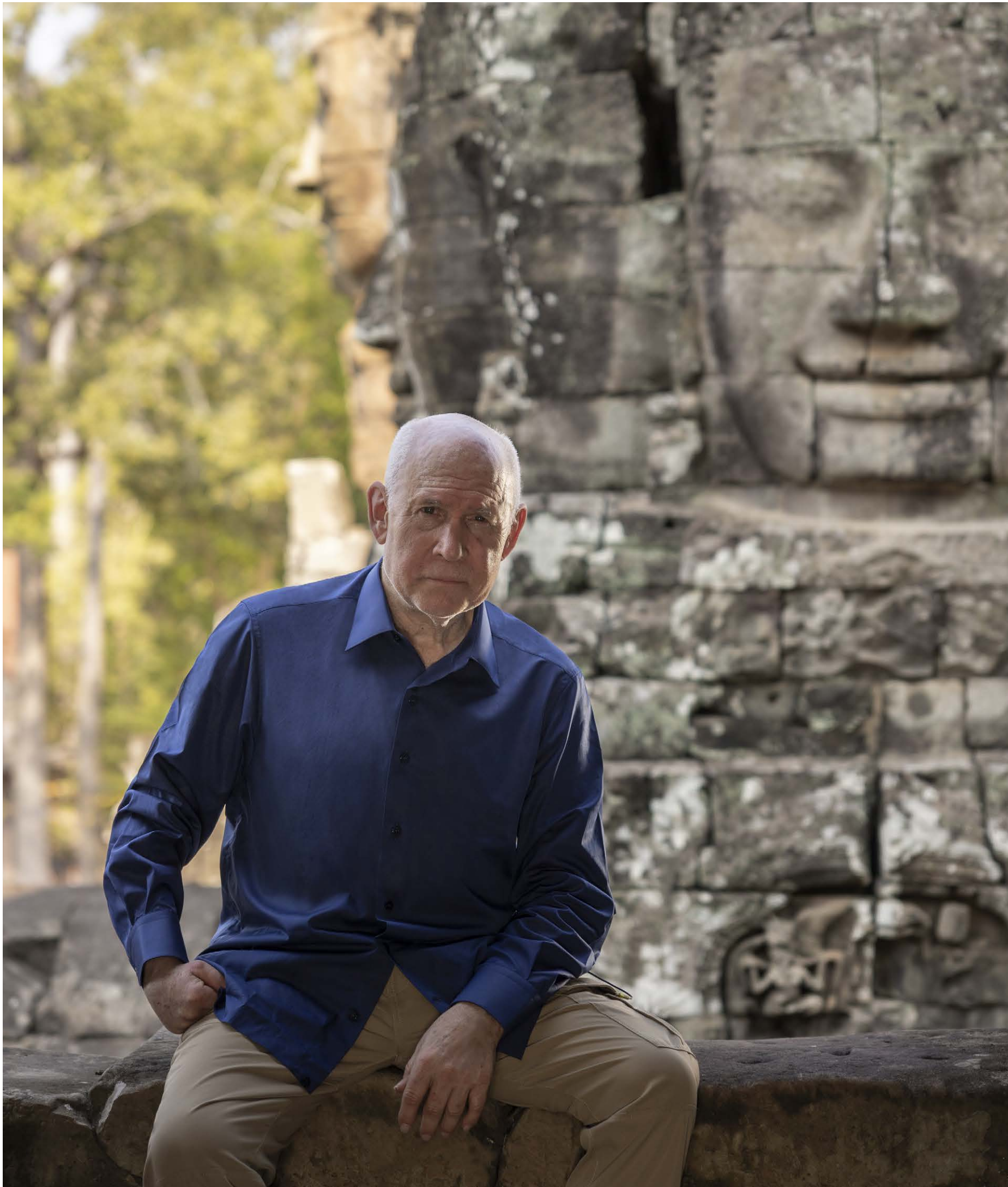
*“Here and there on a bas-relief that miraculously remained in place are the dancers veiled in lichen [...]. For centuries nature has continued its battle against the hand of man; [...].*

*“Nature is the most powerful of all gods. [...]. The galleries are adorned with bas-reliefs, famous throughout the world; but it would be as foolish to try to describe them as to try to describe the jungle.”*

*The image that will remain forever engraved in my memory is this:*

*“...climbing plants grow everywhere, so that at first glance you only see a shapeless mass and you have to pay a little more attention for these impassive, heavy, silent faces to emerge from the stone. Then you have them all around you. They face you, they stand beside you, behind you, a thousand invisible eyes watch over you. They seem to watch you from a remote distance of primeval times and all around you the jungle grows proudly.”*





Steve McCurry at Bayon Temple. Photo by Filippo Ricci.

# My Cambodia

Steve McCurry

*Renowned Photographer and Visual Storyteller*

I have always found Angkor Wat to be a mystical, magical place that saturates the senses, leaving one with a sense of insignificance while being awed by an indescribable example of human accomplishment.

My first journey to Angkor Wat in the late-1990s, during the monsoon season, presented both numerous challenges and incredible opportunities. The dirt road leading to the site was riddled with large potholes, and accommodation was scarce, with only one hotel available. Making phone calls required trekking to a distant shed. Despite all the logistical difficulties, the ruins were filled with the laughter of children playing among the deserted and eerily empty structures, where once bustling villages and monasteries thrived. Some temples were obscured by dense vegetation, necessitating chopping and hacking through the flora to access them. An unexpected encounter with a monkey resulted in a trip to the hospital for rabies shots, adding to the adventure.

Despite the gloomy atmosphere, dancers, musicians, and other alms seekers occasionally appeared, highlighting the enduring life amidst desolation. However, the serene processions of monks silently collecting alms provided a predictable rhythm of life.

The glorious and breathtaking Buddhist temple complex of Angkor Wat has dominated a Cambodian plain for eight centuries and has survived despite the monsoon, drought, neglect, plunder, ill-conceived restoration attempts, and decades of war. It is simply the largest and most spectacular ancient temple complex on earth, its glory reflective of heavenly grandeur.

If, as Goethe said, architecture is frozen music, then Angkor Wat is a celestial symphony. Its magnificence reveals the brilliance of its ancient architects, craftsmen, and builders who strictly adhered to an aesthetic of symmetry so that the temples are mirror images constructed on an East-West axis of the main causeway.





Lotus Gatherer. Angkor, Cambodia, 1997. © Steve McCurry





Caretaker at Ta Prohm Temple. Angkor, Cambodia, 1999. © Steve McCurry

Constructed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by tens of thousands of workers, it was the center of the Khmer Dynasties in the early fifteenth century. Originally a Hindu temple complex, it became a Buddhist temple by the end of the century.

It was António da Madalena, a Portuguese Capuchin friar, who was the first European to visit in 1586. He reported on his journey to a historian of the Archives of Portuguese exploration-colonization in Asia. Henri Mouhot, (1826 -1852) a French naturalist and explorer, has often been given credit for “discovering Angkor Wat, but it was never really lost. His contributions, however, were detailed sketches and eloquent descriptions which brought the ruins to the world’s attention. He wrote:

*“One of these temples—a rival to that of Solomon, and erected by some ancient Michaelangelo—might take an honorable place beside our most beautiful buildings. It is grander than anything left to us by Greece or Rome...”*

Tended for centuries by a handful of monks, the temple areas are now lively places inhabited by 100,000 people, fueled by the ever-growing numbers of visitors from around the world, providing jobs, and some measure of prosperity for the surrounding inhabitants.

The preeminent national symbol, Angkor Wat gives the country pride in its history, identity, and place. A chimerical fusion of aspiration and devotion, the temple complex has been called the Eighth Wonder of the World.

No settlement can grow and thrive without a reliable source of water so from the beginning, meticulous planning ensured that water would be central to the development of Angkor, which is often described as a “hydraulic city.” Channels and reservoirs were constructed to collect and store water coming from the hills, both for flood control and for irrigation for agriculture and rice cultivation. The grandeur of the city was planned and constructed for eternity by Suryavarman II, the ruler who may have planned it for his burial site.

Visitors and pilgrims from around the world travel to experience one of the world’s greatest masterpieces and are greeted not only by the awe-inspiring architecture but also by the vibrant mosaic of life that surrounds it which breathes life into these ancient stones.

As archaeologists and restoration experts from around the world strive to save this complex for the next millennium, Angkor Wat again becomes a place to live and work, observe a vibrant faith and marvel.

Somerset Maugham, the British playwright, and novelist, summed up Angkor Wat, *“I have not seen anything in the world more beautiful than the temples at Angkor.”*

As the modern traveler, writer, and chef, Anthony Bourdain opined, *“It’s an irritating reality that many places and events defy description. Angkor Wat and Machu Picchu seem to demand silence, like a love affair you can never talk about”.*





Buddhist Monk Walks in the Rain. Angkor Wat, Cambodia, 1998. © Steve McCurry





Terry D. Garcia at Ta Prohm Temple. Photo by Alessandro Moggi.

# The “lost” city of Angkor

Terry D. Garcia  
*CEO, Exploration Ventures*

**I**t has been almost a quarter century since my first visit to Angkor, the ancient capital of the once mighty Khmer empire. In early 2000, I was the executive vice president of National Geographic and accompanied a group of scientists on a field visit to Cambodia.

Several days following my arrival in Siem Reap I rose before sunrise and traveled to the massive temple complex, Angkor Wat. As I waited in the darkness, I wondered if it would live up to early explorers’ descriptions. To my delight, the complex, illuminated by a gloriously spectacular sunrise, was everything I had imagined and more. And like those early explorers, I was eager to know more about the people who were responsible for this architectural marvel.

Since my first visit, I have made many subsequent trips to Cambodia. Without fail, each visit yields new insights into the rich cultural legacy of the ancient Khmer Empire and the country’s stunning natural beauty.

The founder of the Khmer Empire, King Jayavarman II, established his royal capital at Angkor near present day Siem Reap. The Hindu-Buddhist empire lasted from 802 to 1431 AD and covered much of mainland Southeast Asia, including parts of modern Myanmar (Burma), Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and peninsular Malaysia. At its zenith, the Khmer Empire was larger than the contemporaneous Byzantine Empire and its level of urban planning, architectural and engineering achievements exceeded those of European cities during the same period. Within the city was the world’s largest religious complex, Angkor Wat, one of more than 1000 temples in Angkor.

The city of Angkor sat on the northern edge of the great lake, Tonle Sap the largest freshwater body in southeast Asia and covered an area of approximately 1000 square kilometers. By the 12<sup>th</sup> century Angkor was the largest metropolitan area in the world with a population of approximately 1 million dwarfing the





Woodcut by C. W. Bacon from 1950 for the London weekly magazine "Radio Times", which iconographically summarises the long journey told by Somerset Maugham in the book "The Gentleman in the parlour".

populations of Paris and London at that time.

For more than 600 years, the Khmer ruled one of the most dynamic, sophisticated, and powerful empires in the ancient world. By the fifteenth century however the empire faced internal and external challenges and in 1431 the neighboring Ayutthaya (Thai) kingdom to the north sacked Angkor and the empire's center shifted to Phnom Penh.

The first Western visitor to Angkor, was Antonio da Madelena, a Portuguese Capuchin friar in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century but it wasn't until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century that the western public became acquainted with Angkor. It was then the French naturalist and explorer, Henri Mouhot, visited the ancient city. Mouhot is frequently credited with its "discovery" and his description of the temples of Angkor as grander than anything left to us by Greece or Rome inspired successive waves of archaeologists to Cambodia in pursuit of an ancient "lost" city.

Admittedly, few things are more exciting, romantic, or sensational than the purported discovery of a "lost" city. Such discoveries are heralded with great fanfare in headlines around the world. They are the subject of countless books and

movies. Intrepid explorers for centuries have embarked upon quests to find them hoping to achieve fame and fortune. And yet almost without exception, none of these so-called "lost cities" were ever "lost".

Certainly, that was the case with Angkor. Mouhot did not discover a lost city in any true sense. Angkor was well known to local and regional populations. They told him of its existence and likely led him to it. The Khmer people who built the city, continued to live in the area and to use and maintain the temples and other structures for centuries after the fall of the Khmer Empire. Its 'discovery' by Western explorers was at most a reintroduction to the outside world.

Apart from its inaccuracy, the use of the term "lost" too often fosters a viewpoint that ignores the complex histories, continuity, resilience, and transformation of ancient societies. The study and exploration of sites such as Angkor allow us to understand the histories of these societies in their own contexts and to take and apply lessons of the past. Afterall, the challenges that confronted ancient societies—natural disasters, environmental degradation, population pressures, disease, economic disruption, and regional conflict—are the same as those we face today. How we manage our modern-day challenges can be informed by choices—wise and foolish—our predecessors made.

As our travels have taught us, despite the impressive extent of our accumulated knowledge, much remains to be discovered. Indeed, we are entering a new age of exploration, one that promises to be the greatest and most consequential in human history. But today's explorer, rather than searching for new lands or treasures, seeks to better understand our planet, our past and ourselves in order that we may successfully navigate an increasingly complex and challenging global landscape.



Niccolò and Filippo Ricci with the Apsara dancers before their exhibition for SR Explorer. Photo by Alessandro Moggi.





Niccolò Ricci at Ta Prohm Temple. Photo by Alessandro Moggi.

# Sustainable Future

Niccolò Ricci  
*CEO, Stefano Ricci S. p. A..*

Faithful to a vision conceived years ago, centred around the key themes of sustainability's future and the preservation of our planet's natural environments, we at Stefano Ricci affirm our support for certified programmes dedicated to protecting animals in their natural habitats and meticulous scientific research aimed at improving environmental health.

First, we partnered with the Charles Darwin Foundation, where we supported a research programme for the local ecosystem and the conservation of Giant Turtles. Next, we collaborated with the Kazakh Falconry Association for the research and reintroduction of eagles, aided by the Eagle Hunters. Now, we have proudly elected to back the wildlife and environmental conservation work of Wild Earth Allies for this SR Explorer Mission Cambodia.

The organization dedicates itself to a range of projects, including protection and monitoring of Asian elephants in Cambodia's forests and the restoration of key elephant habitat, among others.

For decades, elephants in Cambodia have been subject to exploitation within the tourism industry, a practice that has significantly shortened their lifespans and adversely affected their lifecycles.

While these initiatives may seem distant from the world of fashion, we are committed to promoting them as a means to better coexist with our natural environment. This is not a marketing strategy, but rather a legacy we wish to leave for future generations.





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Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
April 2024

For centuries, Asian elephants have been integral to Cambodian culture and essential to ecosystem health. Today, Asian elephants are endangered largely due to habitat loss. With some of the most intact forests remaining in southeast Asia, Cambodia is a critical refuge for Asian elephants and many other at-risk wildlife.

Wild Earth Allies' mission is to protect vital areas of our natural world for the benefit of wildlife, habitats, and people by inspiring collaborative action. In Cambodia, we work to ensure Asian elephants remain in Cambodia's globally important forests. Together with community and government partners, we conserve millions of acres of key habitat in ways that integrate cultural values and enhance local livelihoods.

We believe investing in locally led conservation is key to turning the tide of biodiversity loss globally. In Cambodia, Tuy Sereivathana (Vathana) directs our community-based elephant conservation to create lasting, positive impact for people and wildlife. Also known as Uncle Elephant, Vathana is a National Geographic Explorer and Goldman Environmental Prize recipient.

We are delighted to be partnering with Stefano Ricci in this new edition of their Explorer project. Together, we will increase protection for Asian elephants and their forest homes in Cambodia. Thank you, Stefano Ricci, for supporting field research and conservation, reforestation, and environmental education to activate the next generation to protect nature.

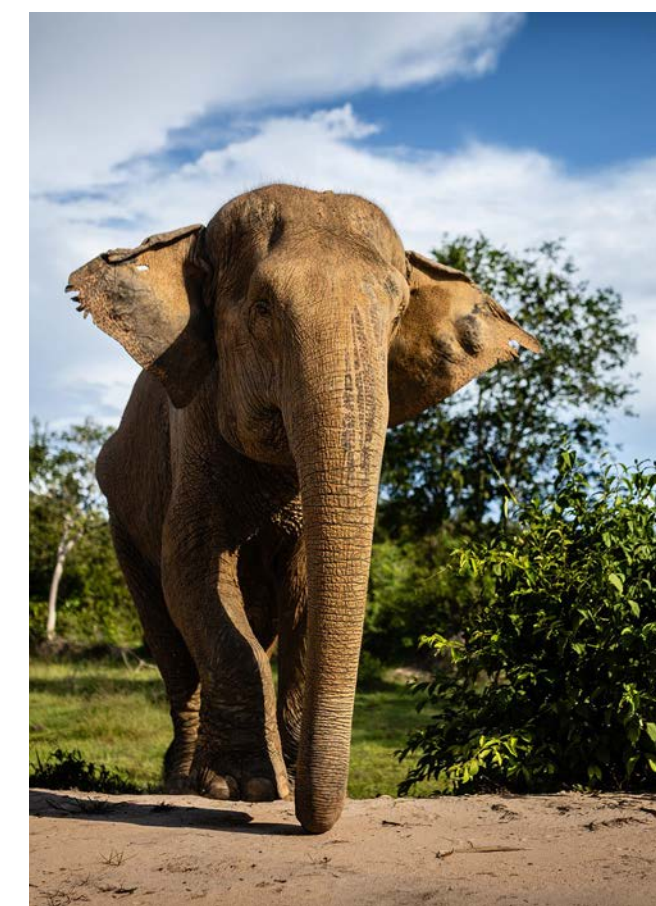
With gratitude,

Katie Frohardt  
Executive Director  
Wild Earth Allies

Clea Newman  
Board Chair  
Wild Earth Allies



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One of the most emotional moments in SR Explorer Mission Cambodia: in the picture Niccolò Ricci creates a connection with an elephant from Kulen Forest.





*Bayon Temple*

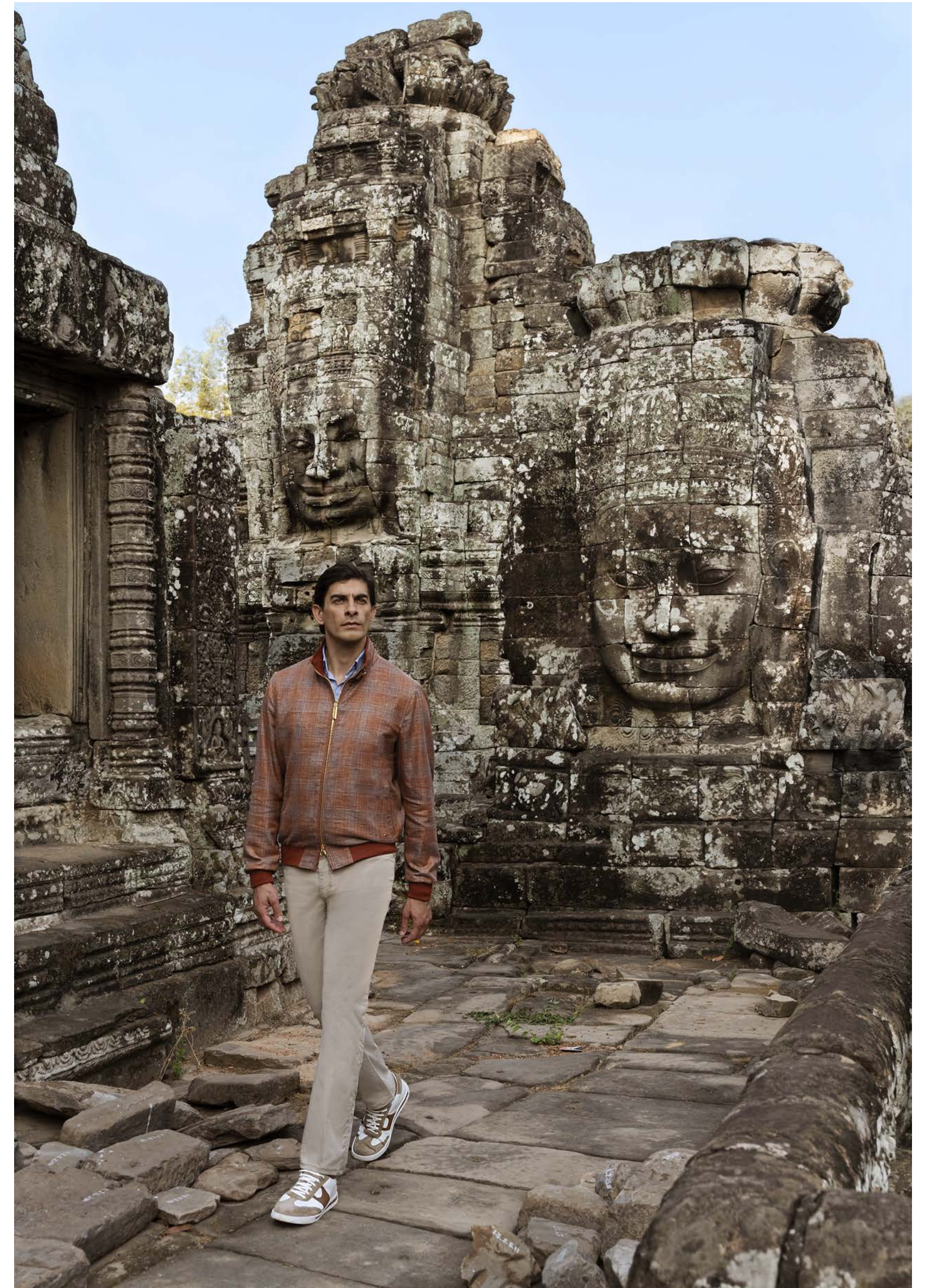




































*Preah Khan Temple*





















*Ta Prohm Temple*









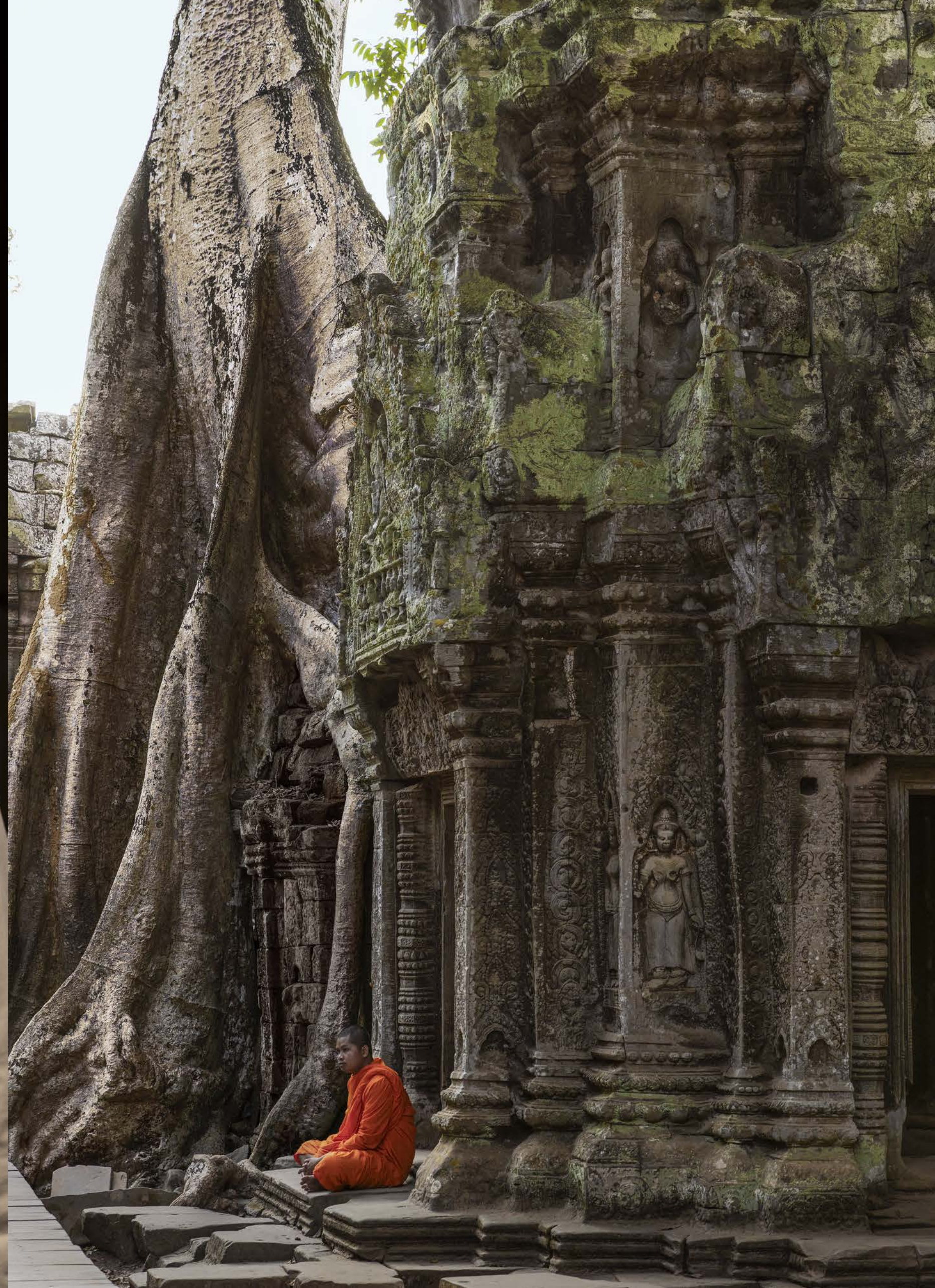




















*Bong Chhouk Lake*









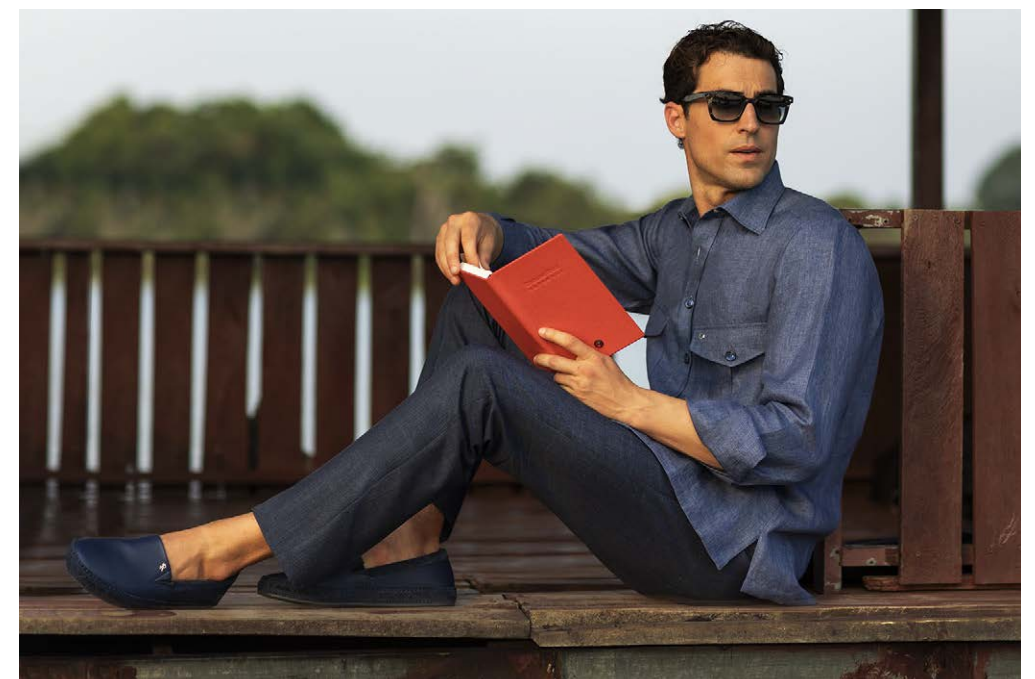
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*Beng Mealea Temple*













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*Kulen Elephant Forest*









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*Tributary of the Mekong River*





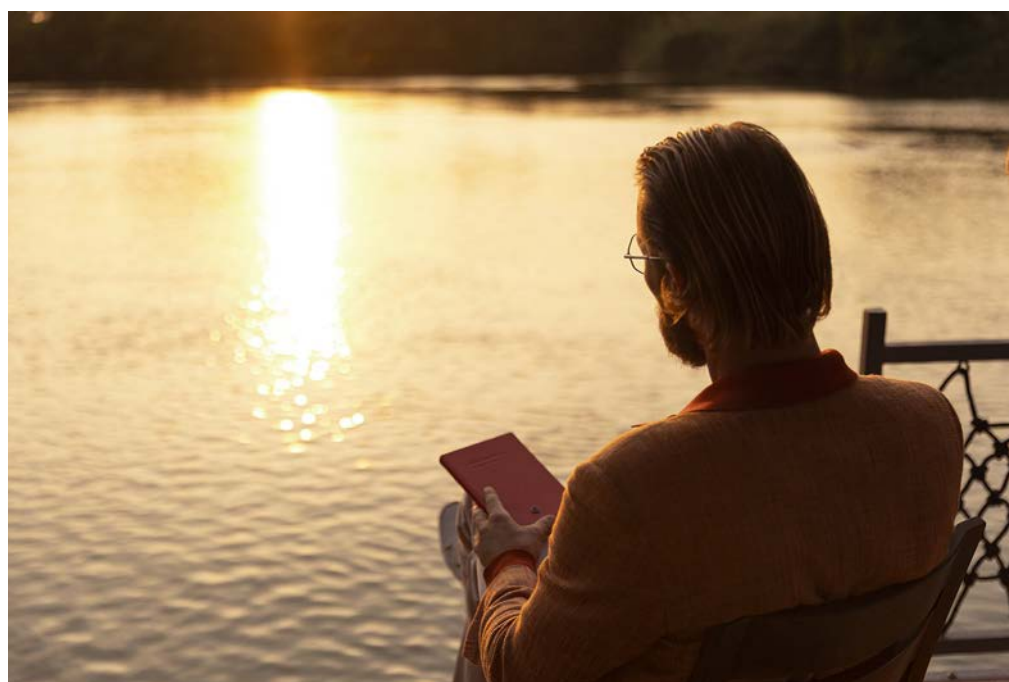




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*Shinta Mani Wild*













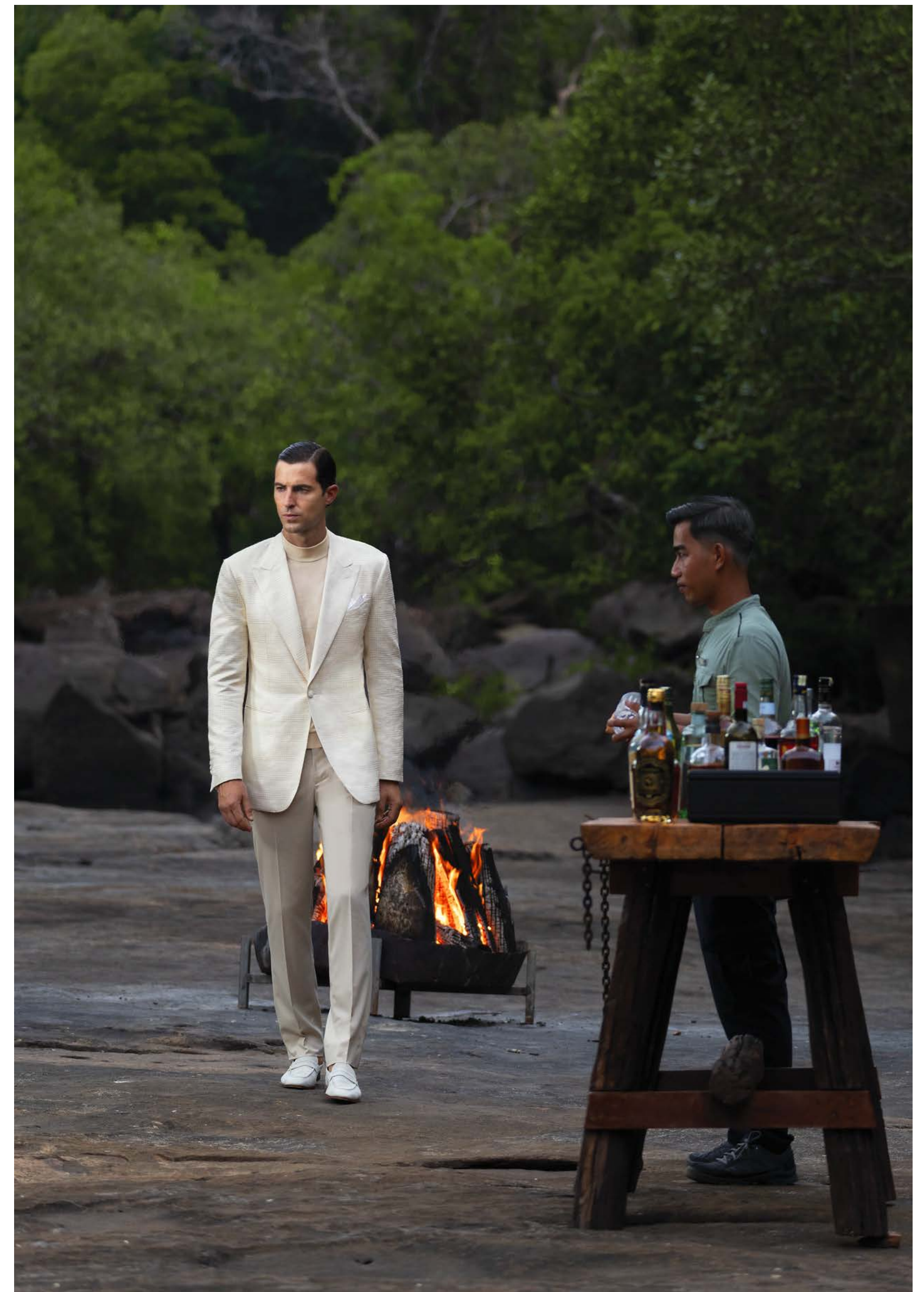




















Bayon Temple, Angkor, surrounded by 216 gigantic stone faces.

LOOK #21  
Blouson, wool, silk and linen blend with suede details;  
Knit crewneck sweater, silk, cashmere and linen;  
Trousers, virgin wool and elastane;  
*Mythos* sunglasses;  
Sneakers, matted crocodile, suede and calfskin leather.

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LOOK #22  
Blouson, wool, silk and linen with suede details;  
Casual shirt, 100% linen;  
Sports trousers, cotton and elastane;  
Baseball cap, technical fabric with suede details;  
*Elite* sunglasses;  
Handmade belt, 100% matted crocodile;  
Sneakers, suede and calfskin leather.

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Courtesy of Stefano Ricci



Ta Prohm, with the trees growing out of the ruins.

LOOK #01  
Three-button suit, wool, silk and linen;  
Knit polo shirt, cotton and linen;  
Panama hat, straw with ribbon;  
*Mythos* sunglasses;  
Loafers, 100% technical fabric with calfskin leather details;  
Handmade duffle bag, 100% cotton with calfskin leather details.

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LOOK #03  
Field jacket, cotton;  
Casual shirt, cotton and linen;  
Sports trousers, lyocell and cotton;  
Handmade belt, 100% calfskin leather;  
Loafers, 100% technical fabric with calfskin leather details;  
*Elite* sunglasses.

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LOOK #42  
Knit hooded zip sweater, 100% cashmere;  
Knit crewneck t-shirt, 100% cashmere;  
Knit jogging trousers, 100% cashmere;  
*Legend* sunglasses;  
Sneakers, 100% technical fabric with calfskin leather details.

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LOOK #41  
Knit jacket, silk and cotton;  
Knit crewneck sweater, silk and cotton;  
Knit trousers, silk and cotton;  
*Safari* sunglasses;  
Sneakers, suede and calfskin leather;  
Handmade large portfolio, 100% calfskin leather.

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LOOK #02  
Hooded jacket, technical fabric;  
Casual shirt, cotton and linen;  
Bermuda shorts, cotton and linen;  
*Explorer* baseball cap, 100% technical fabric;  
*Safari* sunglasses;  
Handmade belt, 100% calfskin leather;  
Loafers, 100% technical fabric with calfskin leather details;  
Handmade backpack, 100% cotton with calfskin leather details.

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Courtesy of Stefano Ricci



Bong Chhouk Lake, daily life on a water reserve.

LOOK #12  
Saharian jacket, 100% linen;  
Crewneck t-shirt, 100% linen;  
Trousers, cotton and linen;  
*Explorer* sunglasses;  
Loafers, 100% calfskin leather.

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LOOK #58  
Two-button suit, wool, silk and linen;  
Knit polo shirt, 100% silk;  
Panama hat, straw with ribbon;  
*Mythos* sunglasses;  
Handmade pocket square, 100% cotton;  
Loafers, 100% suede.

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Preah Khan Temple was the centre of a substantial organization.

LOOK #57  
Two-button Fiesole suit, wool and silk;  
Casual shirt, 100% cotton;  
*Idol* sunglasses;  
Handmade luxury tie set, 100% silk;  
Handmade pocket square, 100% cotton;  
Handmade belt, 100% calfskin leather;  
Precious white gold cufflinks, 18kt gold;  
Loafers, 100% calfskin leather.

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LOOK #13  
Overshirt, 100% linen;  
Crewneck t-shirt, cotton and modal;  
Trousers, wool, silk and linen;  
*Cruiser* sunglasses;  
Loafers, 100% calfskin leather.

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LOOK #11  
Field jacket, wool, linen and silk;  
Knit polo shirt, silk and cotton;  
Sports trousers, cotton and lyocell with calfskin leather details;  
Panama hat, straw with ribbon;  
*Elite* sunglasses;  
Loafers, 100% calfskin leather.

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Beng Mealea was built in sandstone, protected for centuries by the forest.

LOOK #28  
Field jacket, 100% suede;  
Knit crewneck sweater, silk and cotton;  
Five-pocket jeans, cotton;  
*Idol* sunglasses;  
Sneakers, 100% calfskin leather.

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LOOK #48  
Blouson, 100% silk with matted crocodile details;  
Knit polo shirt, silk and cotton with matted crocodile details;  
Knit jogging trousers, silk and cotton with matted crocodile details;  
Baseball cap, silk with matted crocodile details;  
*Safari* sunglasses;  
Sneakers, matted crocodile, suede and calfskin leather.

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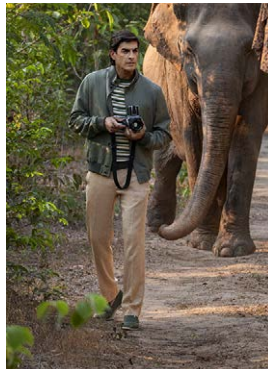
LOOK #56  
Two-button suit, silk, cashmere and linen;  
Knit crewneck sweater, cotton and vicuña;  
*Elite* sunglasses;  
Handmade pocket square, 100% cotton;  
Loafers, 100% calfskin leather with suede details;  
Handmade medium portfolio, 100% calfskin leather.

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LOOK #36  
Knit crewneck sweater, silk and cotton;  
Swim trunks, 100% technical fabric;  
*Triumph* sunglasses;  
Sneakers, 100% calfskin leather;  
Handmade belt bag, 100% calfskin leather.

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LOOK #10  
Blouson, wool, linen and silk;  
Knit crewneck sweater, silk and cotton;  
Trousers, virgin wool, linen and silk;  
Baseball cap, wool, linen and silk;  
*Voyager* sunglasses;  
Loafers, 100% calfskin leather.

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Kulen Forest, the Kingdom of Elephants.

LOOK #29  
Blouson, 100% suede;  
Crewneck t-shirt, cotton and silk;  
Trousers, 100% linen;  
*Elite* sunglasses;  
Sneakers, matted crocodile, suede and calfskin leather.

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LOOK #37  
Knit polo shirt, silk and cotton;  
Swim trunks, 100% nylon technical fabric;  
*Eagle* sunglasses;  
Sneakers, 100% calfskin leather.

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Shinta Mani Wild, sustainable luxury.

LOOK #55  
Field jacket, silk, cashmere and linen;  
Casual shirt, 100% linen;  
Trousers, silk, cashmere and linen;  
*Mythos* sunglasses;  
Loafers, 100% calfskin leather.

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Exploration of a tributary of the Mekong River.

LOOK #27  
Two-button deconstructed jacket, wool, cotton, silk and linen;  
Casual shirt, 100% linen;  
Sports trousers, cotton, modal, silk and elastane;  
*Idol* sunglasses;  
Handmade pocket square, 100% cotton.

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LOOK #26  
Two-button Fiesole jacket, wool, cotton, silk and linen;  
Knit polo shirt, 100% silk;  
Trousers, 100% cotton;  
*Mythos* sunglasses;  
Handmade pocket square, 100% cotton;  
Loafers, 100% suede with calfskin leather details.

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LOOK #63  
One-button Fiesole jacket, 100% *Antico Setificio Fiorentino* silk;  
Tuxedo shirt, 100% silk;  
Trousers, 100% wool;  
Handmade pocket square, 100% cotton;  
Precious white gold cufflinks, 18kt gold;  
Handmade belt, 100% nubuck crocodile;  
Loafers, 100% suede.

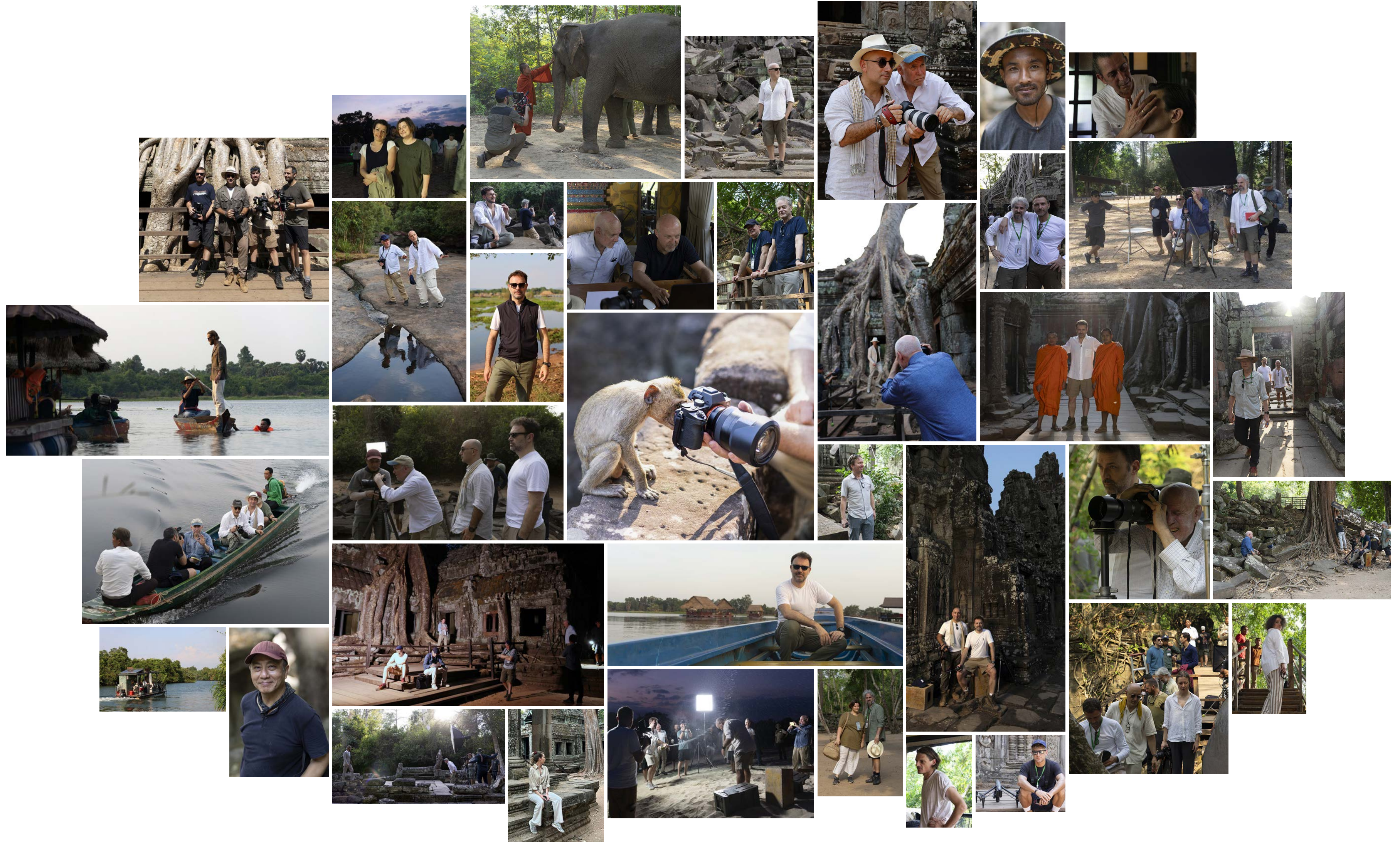
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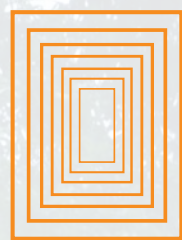
LOOK #64  
One-button Fiesole tuxedo jacket, 100% silk;  
Knit mock neck sweater, 100% silk;  
Trousers, 100% wool;  
Handmade pocket square, 100% cotton;  
Loafers, 100% suede.

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## SHINTA MANI WILD

A BENSLEY COLLECTION

Nestled deep within the wilderness of the South Cardamom National Park, in a pristine wildlife corridor one and a half hours drive south of Phnom Penh, Shinta Mani Wild - A Bensley Collection offers an all-inclusive luxury tented camp experience. From the exhilarating moment of arrival - criss-crossing the rapids via a 400m zip line, straight into the Landing Zone Bar, there is no such thing as a typical day at Shinta Mani Wild.

Perched over 1.5km of river and waterfalls, the 14 one-bedroom tents (100sqm) and one two-bedroom tent (141sqm) have been meticulously designed to evoke Bensley's vision of what it might have been like to be on luxury safari in the jungles of Cambodia with Jacky O', who travelled throughout the Kingdom with King Sihanouk in 1967. Stunningly realised, this extraordinary product of Bensley's imagination provides an experience unlike any other in Asia.

Creative luxury adventures include exploring the untrammelled waterways of South East Asia's last wild estuarine ecosystem aboard a custom Bensley-designed expedition boat; or joining armed Wildlife Alliance rangers on anti-poaching patrols. Ever-changing menus are inspired by sustainably foraged wild edible plants, as the camp's naturalists guide guests through the forest to discover - and taste - Cambodia's natural larder. The Khmer Tonics Spa provides chemical-free treatments, including a river-stone foot massage while soaking in a waterfall pool.





# STEFANO RICCI

## E X P L O R E R



Scan the QR code to access the complete collection  
and all the details of the looks.



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DAY 5 · 6.35 pm



is a must-be place.  
Entering this lush forest and  
experiencing the ancestral sustainable  
life in an exquisite  
lifestyle.



"THERE ARE NO  
FOREIGN LANDS.  
IT IS THE TRAVELER  
WHO IS FOREIGN."



