

## HOSPITALITY &amp; ENVIRONMENT

## Waste not, want not

*Bali*

When Amanda Marcella joined Indonesian hospitality group Potato Head to help with expansion at its Bali hotel and beach club, she didn't expect to become obsessed with cigarette butts, used napkins and old bed linen. All now occupy her thoughts: she is the hotel's director of sustainability. Her purview extends far beyond straws and plastic bottles at the Potato Head's home in Seminyak. "Here we're doing something for the planet," says Marcella, as she takes MONOCLE to see Potato Head's NGO, The Community Waste Project, which opened in October next to Bali's biggest refuse dump.

Bali's beauty is renowned but it has a rubbish problem. The government estimates that some 52 per cent of the island's waste is mismanaged, with plastic washing up on beaches and littering streets. The rest ends up in landfill, where the refuse forms huge malodorous piles. Dry weather, plus methane produced by the waste, can trigger fires that cover the island in foul smoke.

In 2016, Ronald Akili, Potato Head's CEO and co-founder, decided that his company needed to do something. Since then it has reduced the amount of its rubbish that ends up in landfill from 60 per cent to 2.6 per cent. Styrofoam is melted with acid and mixed with powdered oyster shells to make material for containers such as soap dispensers. Used cooking oil becomes candles. And plastic is melted into panels that then become furniture. The Community Waste Project is the next step. Here, pre-sorted rubbish bags are audited, heaps of covered compost take up one corner while melting machines turn buckets of shredded plastic into pallets. Anything that can't be processed on site is handed over to trusted third parties.

But this is just the start: the facility has a daily capacity of 10 tonnes but Bali produces 1.6 million tonnes of waste a year, with about 15 per cent coming from the hospitality industry. The aim is to make the project replicable. The new waste centre was founded in collaboration with two other companies, with five more paying a monthly waste-disposal fee. All benefit from Potato Head's expertise, says Isabella Rowell, CEO

of The Mexicola Group and a co-founder of the project. Without detailed knowledge of how waste disposal actually works, even well-intentioned measures can go awry. Rowell recalls how her restaurants and bars ditched plastic straws for recyclable ones some years ago only to later discover that the new straws needed a special machine to be recycled and there was no such machine in Bali.

The new project means that their efforts help more than just their image. "Sustainability is a huge marketing tool but realistically, if things continue as is, we won't have a business any more," says Rowell, who is clear-eyed about the industry's urgent need to clean up its act. Bali's allure will eventually fade if it ends up buried in plastic wrappers and used condoms, so the local government is talking about restricting new hospitality developments in tourism hotspots.

The long-term plan for The Community Waste Project is to turn a profit from charging user fees and selling recycled products. This revenue should cover expenses and further expansion. New partners are being actively sought out and there are even hopes to move into processing domestic waste. Almost no one recycles in Bali but given the opportunity, this could change. Staff at Potato Head are already bringing in some of their household waste and this environmentally minded community has a record of driving meaningful change. — JRA [seminyak.potatohead.co](http://seminyak.potatohead.co)

**"If things continue as is, we won't have a business any more"**



IMAGE: Stéphanie Ruchaud



## DESIGN

## Fresh approach

*France*

Edgar Jayet, who is just 27 years old, is fast becoming a name to watch on the design circuit. The Paris-born interior architect and designer founded his eponymous studio in 2021 while still attending the prestigious French design school École Camondo. Jayet's practice now has offices in France and northern Italy. "I wanted to have an international presence and Venice is a crossroads of artisanal know-how," he says. "I also wanted to integrate the city's cultural life in the long term."

Jayet's works are contemporary creations, made for the requirements of our time and infused with the skills of classically trained artisans. "It used to drive me mad to see a historic piece of furniture and hear people say, 'We don't know how to make this any more.' We are the heirs of this tradition of craft."

His first collection of furniture design, Unheimlichkeit, takes its name from the Freudian expression for the uncanny. Featuring corner armchairs, a day bed and a folding screen among other pieces, the line takes inspiration from 18th-century cabinet-making and Napoleonic furniture. Jayet called on Venetian textile designer Chiarastella Cattana to create a cotton-canvas panelling for the furniture frames. Bringing a fresh perspective to long-standing traditions of craft and furniture design, Jayet is on the right track to write his name into the long history of French design. — LMT

[edgarjayet.com](http://edgarjayet.com)

START-UP HOT SPOT  
Doing it their way*Yerevan*

In the mid-1970s, Apple and HP famously capitalised on the "garage rules", one of which advised, "No regulations, no bureaucracy." In Armenia's capital, Yerevan, the humble garage is still proving to be a launchpad for innovation. In the city's maze of winding alleyways and mismatched courtyards, rows of single-storey garages have been transformed into hubs of creativity. With their low-rent appeal, garages are drawing young entrepreneurs to start their own cafés and shops.

A pioneer of this movement is Karlen Dilbaryan, who runs

garages line Yeznik Koghbatsi street like vibrant market stalls. One of them houses Fem, an Armenian jewellery brand. Nearby, Gini Pig, a pizzeria and wine bar founded by Australian-Armenian repatriate Dareh Koooumchian, attracts an eclectic clientele: start-up founders hash out ideas alongside diplomats, officials and artists in this unconventional setting.

Adding to this vibrant scene is Garaj, a project supported by the Armenian Educational Foundation and the Gyumri Information Technologies Centre. Here, 350 students study for free, coming up with inventions for which they hold full-patent ownership, such as the country's first cashless vending machine.



the Voch Luys Voch Mut coffee shop from his garage. "I never imagined that my coffee shop would become a model for other projects," he says. "But the garage has taken on a new life, especially with the recent wave of newcomers and repatriates."

Indeed, an influx of new residents (following three waves of migration by ethnic Armenians from 2018 to 2023) has helped to spark a rediscovery of these hidden assets. In Kond, Yerevan's oldest district,

Yerevan's start-up scene has been noticed and, in a vote of confidence for the nation, September 2024 saw the city host the international technology conference Emerge, a valuable gathering point for entrepreneurs and investors.

As Yerevan embraces this blend of technology, artistry and freedom, it is clear that the spirit of "garage rules" is alive and well. In today's Yerevan, anything is possible and the garage is still where it all begins. — LHA