

world's coolest KIDS CLUB

A KIDS CLUB AT HOTELS IS QUITE NORMAL THESE DAYS, BUT THEY DO COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES – SOME FANTASTIC, AND EVEN SOME WITH PROFESSIONAL CHILD CARE SPECIALISTS! SONEVA KIRI WAS THE FIRST SONEVA RESORT TO OFFER A KIDS CLUB AND THEY WENT ALL IN!

By Mia Ljungberg Nevado – CEM Chief Executive Mom, Travel In Style With a Child



I have done my fair share of traveling the world and exploring kids clubs with my oldest son who is now 3, but of all the places he has been to, the place he remembers the most is from his first trip to Thailand, where he visited “The Eco Den” at Soneva Kiri and it was love at first sight!

Even if you are not an Eco Globetrotter, Nature Enthusiast or even a child and despite your age - it is hard not to get impressed when seeing “The Den” at Soneva Kiri for the first time. It is mind-blowing and a feast for the eyes – a manta ray-shaped bamboo “spaceship-like” building hanging safely high up in the trees. The only risk you and your kids run here is that you might not get to spend as much time with your kids as you normally do on a vacation as they will want to spend all their time here! Soneva Kiri does not actually call “The Den” a kids club, since it welcomes teenagers as well, which is rare, but there are no age limits and no matter what age, I bet your child will love it! (I have to admit that even I sneaked in and had a blast reading books on top of a glass floor looking down on the trees and plants beneath me.)

When meeting with Eva Malmström, one of Soneva’s founders, she highlights the fact that one of the things she loves the most about “The Den” at Soneva Kiri is that there are no iPhones, iPads, video games, TV’s or anything electronic allowed. Here

nature is the entertainment and kids get to be kids to play and discover the best that nature has to explore in a safe environment and as a parent you don’t need to worry about the next roaming bill!

One of the many things that makes Soneva such a unique experience for children is that there is a thought behind everything and an extreme attention to detail.

As Eva continues: “I like children to discover being close to nature and to learn about animals and plants and to learn empathy. I like them to learn how to make things with their hands, like paper greeting-cards, bags, etc., etc, and above all to socialize with other children without staring down at a mobile phone all the time. They can learn how to grow things organically and even how to make compost. We will put a compost heap onto a glass wall of “The Den” so they can see the layers and worms through the glass.”

Children are so exposed to being online and connected that even for them a small detox, even if just for a few hours, will be good for them.

Soneva Kiri is perfect for families because they have something for every taste and age. Even the Spa offers unique treatments for children, using only organic products of course! There is the world famous ice cream station which is a must – free of charge and with more than 60 different flavours! Adults are welcome too! No diet here! When I asked my son what his best memory

from our stay was, he couldn’t choose between playing in The Den, eating ice-cream or if it was the movie night under the stars at the open air cinema!

At the sister property, Soneva Fushi, another out of this world “Den” is being built, is due to open for Easter 2014 and nothing has been spared here either. Soneva took in the most famous architect firm from Bangkok, “Habitat” to help with the design. The size of this club is the size of a small hotel! There will be a Library and Cinema room, full of books and movies for every age and taste. There will be a dress up and make up room where children can dress up as they like and there is even a LEGO room where children can put LEGO on the floors and walls and let their creativity explode. There will be a music room with all sorts of instruments for all ages to practice....sound proof walls of course! Hold on, there will even be a bar with dance floor, DJ corner and a fully equipped cocktail or rather mocktail bar as they call it where children can mix their own drinks – NON alcoholic of course. Parents are invited to come and enjoy drinks here too. With the fair share of smoothies I have made over the past 3 years together with my son, he should know one or two tricks here.

There will also be a kitchen where children can learn to cook delicious meals with the local organic ingredients that they can pick themselves from the organic garden just outside and they can invite their parents for lunch, just like at Soneva Kiri in Thailand. Forget hotdogs and fish-fingers, here it is all about healthy snacks and organic food, served in a way so that its hard for the kids to say no!

There will be a botanical garden full of flowers and trees with swings and nests for the children to explore and relax in and for the older kids there will be a special lounge with mood lighting and daybeds where they can relax and a special bedroom for the toddlers with cots and beds where they can recharge.

My son is looking forward to exploring the almost life-sized pirate ship which is being constructed with local sustainable timber on the beach. There are several pools, a Nemo-shaped toddler pool and a pool for the teenagers with sun beds and umbrellas. It’s like a mini-resort within the resort and all under supervision of professional staff. I can’t help but be a little jealous of the kids who will get to stay at Soneva Fushi in the near future!

When asking Eva what she would like the younger guests to remember from their stays at Soneva Kiri and Soneva Fushi she says: “There are so many things for the children to do, but things they can learn from and knowledge that they can take with them when they leave.” The combination of art, science and nature is simply unique. Soneva has managed to combine it all in a safe, stylish surrounding and this is how children should travel or at least how I would like my own children to. Here I know they are going to make new friends and long-lasting memories. It can be hard to entertain children and especially teenagers when you are on a remote island, but at both Soneva Kiri and Soneva Fushi they have gone out of their way to please guests of every age.

What next? Eva says with a smile: “For many years I said we should have spa training for the children so they can learn how to massage their mum’s tired shoulders!” Yes please! ✨