

Thomas Despin

Founder, Reconnect Island Resort · Reconnect

Central Sulawesi, Indonesia

FOCUS	Island development, Sustainable hospitality, Off-grid infrastructure, Resort operations, Hospitality technology, Indonesia

About

Thomas Despin is a French-born Indonesian entrepreneur based in Central Sulawesi. He is the founder of Reconnect Island Resort, an off-grid resort on Buka Buka Island that offers access to the Togean Islands region.

His work centres on building and operating hospitality, tourism and infrastructure projects in remote parts of Indonesia. At Reconnect, that has meant handling everything from solar power, desalination and Starlink connectivity to licensing, access logistics, staffing, marketing and day-to-day operations. His view, learned by doing it, is that remote hospitality is an infrastructure and operations business before it is a hospitality business: the view is never the hard part, making a difficult location work as a real operation is.

Beyond Reconnect, his projects include Kabisu, a villa and hospitality development on Sumba; a network of tourism information platforms covering Sulawesi, the Togean Islands and Banggai; Asasal Resort, an early-stage project in Banggai; and hotelbase.ai, an early hospitality software project. Through The Island Guy he also works with a small number of people building their own island and resort projects in Indonesia, and he writes publicly about how such projects actually get built.

Reconnect has operated since 2019 on the 160-hectare Buka Buka Island. It runs on 93 percent solar power and fully desalinated water, with 20 rooms across eight accommodation types, a local team of around 25, more than 30 mapped dive sites nearby, and thousands of guests a year. Thomas holds a degree in social psychology from the Universite Victor Segalen in Bordeaux and works across French, English and Indonesian.

CAREER

Work

2019 to present · 4 roles

BB

Founder, Reconnect Island Resort

Buka Buka Island, Central Sulawesi

2019 to Present

Founded and operates Reconnect, an off-grid island resort on the 160-hectare Buka Buka Island, built end to end: land and licensing, solar power, desalination and Starlink connectivity, and a local team of around 25. Offers 20 rooms, more than 30 mapped dive sites nearby, and access to the Togean Islands region.

IN

Founder, HotelBase.ai

Indonesia

An early hospitality software project built to help independent hotels and resorts with guest communication, pricing, marketing and operations, drawn from the systems built to run a remote resort.

SI

Developer, Kabisu Sumba

Sumba, Indonesia

A villa and hospitality development on the island of Sumba, in development.

BI

Developer, Asasal Resort

Banggai, Indonesia

An early-stage resort project in the Banggai region.

Education

UV

Licence (Bachelor's), Social Psychology

Universite Victor Segalen (Bordeaux II)

2009 to 2013