



Case Study: Gubaou Mari Wind of the Spirit

Born out of a desire to showcase island life in the Torres Strait, Gubaou Mari (Wind of the Spirit) offers eco-cultural tours and recreational activities on Masig Island with partners Zephyr Tours.

Owners Songhie and Kimiko Mosby have partnered with Zephyr Tours to deliver a unique cultural and recreational experience for visitors with kitesurfing and fishing tours on offer.

"Gubaou Mari is a facilitator and ambassador. The tours are opportunities to promote understanding and appreciation of Masigalgal people and the lifestyle that is guided by our connection to our land and sea country," Ms Mosby said.

Songhie and Kimiko began planning Gubaou Mari in 2015 with a trial run two years later consisting of six kilters from Zephyr Tours looking to find the best destination for kite tours.

A chance meeting a few years prior sparked the beginning of what has been a successful partnership.

"Zephyr Tours are constantly on the lookout for new and exciting destinations for their kite tours. During 2012 and 2013, two kitesurfing treks travelled through Zenadth Kes [Torres Strait], using Masig as the main contact point...

"Jenny Oceans, the owner of Zephyr Tours was part of the 2013 tour. Masigalgal seamen were used as the rescue crew supporting the kilters and Songhie was one of the support crew," Ms Mosby said.

Partnering with Zephyr Tours is a mutually beneficial relationship for the two businesses due to the quality and wealth of experience and knowledge that can be shared.

"Jenny has 14 years experience in the tourism industry. Zephyr now runs kite tours to a number of destinations worldwide," Ms Mosby said.

Gubaou Mari also works to share cultural knowledge and community benefits by employing local Masigalgal crews.

"We contract all our workers from the community – rescue crew and boats, cultural guides, artisans and performers. It is vitally important to us to have benefits returned to the community," Ms Mosby said.





CaseStudy

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Living and operating a business in a remote community does have its drawbacks, but there are significant highlights to working in tourism Ms Mosby said.

“We have limited access to professionals that could assist with a marketing strategy and lack of sufficient IT knowledge, plus there is the high cost of living.

“But I always enjoy when visitors are awestruck by our lifestyle and environment. It’s amazing to know we have brought about a greater understanding of Indigenous people and our way of life through a living experience,” Ms Mosby said.

What is Gubaou Mari?

Gubaou Mari operates out of Masig Island in Zenadh Kes providing eco-cultural and recreational activities for visitors.

“On arrival, there is a welcome Kaikai (feast) for the visitors for the official Welcome to Country by the PBC Chair. Elders and some community leaders are invited to the Kaikai to share Masig stories and traditional protocol in a relaxed setting. Songhie takes the visitors on a Culture Walk to show and explain our significant sites and story places of Masig.

Local rangers do a session on our seasonal calendar explaining how our four winds determine our lifestyle. There is mullet netting with our cultural guides, sharing the catch in the community and ending with cooking of their catch over an open fire.

Local artisans will hold weaving lessons, teaching visitors of different natural resources available and their uses. The visitors will make a basket or knapsack or hat to use during their visit. During the tour, we introduce simple island words to our visitors, like good morning, good night, thank you,” said Ms Mosby.

What inspired Gubaou Mari?

“We wanted to work for ourselves, do something for ourselves after working for the government for most of our lives. We also wanted to do something that would add value to our community,” Ms Mosby said.

What advice would you give to tourism operators looking for partnerships?

“Ensure that they have the same values as you and have a good track record. Be clear about each other’s expectations. Get to know one another and have complete honesty and open communication at all times,” Ms Mosby said.

What advice would you give to those wanting to be involved in tourism?

“Have a clear vision and keep true to it. Use every opportunity that is presented and network with people in the business. If you don't know something, get out there and find out about it, research and ask,” Ms Mosby said.

