



Good Practice Story Title:

The Renaissance of a Boomer: Manila's Inclusive&Sustainable Breakfast Innovations through Authentic Connections with Local Producers In Pantelleria Island"

Destination:

Pantelleria, Sicily

Country:

Italy

Submitting Organization:

Unconventional Hospitality for Residenza Khaddiuggia

Category:

- Destination Management
- Nature & Scenery
- Environment & Climate
- Culture & Tradition
- Thriving Communities
- Business & Marketing



Destination description:

Pantelleria, often referred to as the "Black Pearl of the Mediterranean," is a volcanic island situated between Sicily and Tunisia. Renowned for its striking natural beauty and rich cultural heritage, the entire island is designated as a National Park, highlighting its dedication to environmental conservation and sustainable tourism. Pantelleria's unique landscape features terraced vineyards, ancient stone walls, and thermal springs, offering visitors a deep connection with nature and traditional Pantesco culture. The island supports diverse flora and fauna, including endemic species and migratory birds, making it a paradise for eco-tourists and nature enthusiasts. Visitors can experience the "sound of silence," a serene backdrop that complements the island's sustainable ethos. Sustainable practices are woven into the island's fabric, from the cultivation of the famous Zibibbo grapes to the preservation of historic dammusi structures. Eco-friendly activities such as hiking, biking, and sailing allow visitors to explore the island's treasures while experiencing the genuine hospitality of a community committed to protecting their unique environment. Pantelleria truly embodies the essence of sustainable tourism.





Summary of Good Practice Story:

Manila, a resilient woman in her late 80s, overcame scepticism and numerous obstacles to transform her vacation home, a Dammuso (a traditional stone house and distinctive feature of Pantelleria's cultural heritage), into a thriving eco-resort. Residenza Khaddiuggia is located within the island, which is entirely designated as a National Park, underscores the importance of preserving the environment and engaging the local community.

Manila's inclusive and sustainable breakfasts are the heart of her success, made possible through authentic relationships with local producers and suppliers. She has rediscovered and reinterpreted traditional recipes, using local ingredients and adapting them to meet various dietary needs, creating "Unconventional Breakfasts" that achieve zero waste while strengthening community bonds and supporting the local economy.

She creates her own breakfasts and also develops her creativity based on what her garden offers her, from figs to mulberries to lemons, even to creating the famous Sicilian granitas and serving them inside the typical "brioche with tupper". We can talk about "zero step" products.

Her innovative use of social media has involved local producers, turning them into active participants and promoting their products. Her efforts have significantly boosted the local economy by promoting circular practices and increasing sales of local products.

By interviewing local producers and partners, Manila highlighted the importance of their work and the stories behind their often family-run businesses. This approach raised guests' awareness of the quality of typical products and authentic experiences, showcasing the passion and dedication of those who work tirelessly to promote their territory.

This success has positioned the resort as a model of eco-friendly hospitality within a protected national park. Manila's innovative use of social media has made her the face of Residenza Khaddiuggia, establishing it as a recognizable brand. This impactful approach attracts visitors seeking authentic experiences and responsible tourism.



Issues faced:

Manila faced 7 main challenges in transforming her vacation home into an eco-resort:

1. **Inclusive&Sustainable Breakfasts:**

- Adapting traditional recipes for vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, lactose-free, sports nutrition, halal, and kosher diets.
- Conducting extensive research and taking online courses on dietary needs.

2. **Engaging Local Producers:**

- Building authentic relationships and promoting sustainability beyond just pricing.
- Convincing local producers to engage both offline and on social media.

3. **Supplier Visits:**

- Managing energy to visit suppliers during the hot season (June to September).

4. **Food Waste and Water Scarcity:**

- Implementing portion control and advance preparation to minimize food waste.
- Creating single-serve portions in glass containers.
- Addressing water scarcity and sourcing difficulties on the island.

5. **Staff Involvement:**

- Motivating local young staff to take on responsibilities and grow professionally.

6. **Guest Involvement:**

- Encouraging guests to minimize food and water waste.
- Collecting video testimonials from guests.

7. **Technological Challenges:**

- Learning to use social media effectively.
- Overcoming the fear of judgment to appear confidently on camera.

These challenges required innovative solutions, resilience, and adaptability, leading to the successful transformation of Residenza Khaddiuggia.



Solution:

Manila tackled the challenges by focusing on inclusive and sustainable breakfasts, rediscovering traditional recipes and adapting them for various dietary needs using local ingredients. She built strong relationships with local producers, ensuring fresh, organic supplies while educating them on the value of sustainable collaboration. To address food and water waste, she implemented rainwater harvesting and desalination systems, and adopted zero-waste and plastic-free practices. Manila promoted a circular economy, encouraging guests to buy directly from producers and engage in authentic local experiences, boosting the local economy and awareness. Through social media, she shared these stories supported by several students in their 20s in internships at a tourism academy, making Residenza Khaddiuggia a recognizable brand known for its eco-friendly hospitality and deep community connections.

Methods, Steps, and Tools applied:

Manila's journey in transforming her holiday home into an eco-resort was a **5-step process** that not only revitalized her dammuso but also fostered deep bonds with the community, boosted the local economy, and established Residenza Khaddiuggia as a model of eco-friendly hospitality.

1. Research, Learning & Implementing Inclusive and Sustainable Breakfasts.

- Took **online courses and conducted independent research on dietary needs**, including vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, lactose-free, sports nutrition, halal, and kosher diets.
- Used traditional recipes and experimented with adapting them using local ingredients to meet diverse dietary requirements.
- All dishes are made in-house, tailored to guests' preferences and dietary needs, tracked using a digital breakfast menu.

About Food Waste Reduction:

- adopted efficient methods such as **portion control** and **advanced preparation** to avoid food waste.
- prepared **single-serve portions** in glass containers, maintaining hygiene and reducing waste.





- **Rotated products on the buffet** based on what local producers provided daily and weekly, considering seasonality, availability, and weather conditions.
- Used **small-sized patties** so guests could take only the desired amount of food, avoiding waste and allowing them to return for more if needed.

2. Building Relationships with Local Producers:

- **Engaged with local farmers** and fishermen to source fresh, organic ingredients, promoting a circular economy.
- **Emphasized sustainable collaboration**, creating strong relationships based on shared values and storytelling.
- Asked some local producers to provide **typical products from the island for free as a marketing tool**, leaving a small gift for guests with the claim, "Take home a piece of Pantelleria."
- Included **producers' brochures or postcards with a resort identification code** so that when guests visited the producers, they knew where they came from.

3. Plastic-Free & Water Management Commitment.

- Provided guests with **high-quality water bottles for free** that kept water cool for hours during their excursions.
- Informed guests that the **facility's water was drinkable and purified** for refilling their bottles for free
- Implemented **rainwater harvesting and desalination systems** to address water scarcity.
- Used **innovative signage to communicate the importance of water conservation**, showing a cistern image and explaining that water delivery occurred only once a week.
- Created an **innovative Towel Reuse Communication**, explaining that money saved would be reinvested in sustainability activities.

4. Effective Communication and Guest Engagement:

- Used Canva to create a **digital breakfast menu** emphasizing local products and Manila's creations with local ingredients.



- Created a **Food Map** of Pantelleria **highlighting local partners' locations** and featuring Manila's face as the protagonist of these sustainable choices.
- Developed a "**Territory Book**" containing profiles of each producer, supplier, and partner, complete with QR codes for guests to learn more about the experiences.
- **Guest interaction with guests during breakfast time**, offering personalized recommendations and fostering a sense of community.
- **Researched and recommended restaurants, wineries, shops, and mini-markets across the island to accommodate guests' specific dietary needs.**
- **Contacted guests via email and phone before their arrival to understand their dietary preferences**, allergies, and intolerances, ensuring proper provisioning.
- Learned to ask for **video testimonials** from guests intelligently, targeting different categories of guests so each could see themselves in the stories. These testimonials included experiences with local producers and the authentic exploration of the island.

5. Social Media and Branding:

- **Support from an expert in responsible tourism** to communicate and showcase her efforts.
- **Involved five 20-year-old students** from an international tourism and hospitality academy in creating content (texts, photos, videos) for social media during their internships.
- Created an **editorial plan aligned with the 17 SDG's.**
- **Authentic Posting:** Learned to create "imperfect posts" for Instagram and Facebook, maintaining her authenticity and genuine style.
- **Story Sharing:** Shared stories of her collaborations with local producers and the eco-friendly practices at the resort.





Achievements and Results:

Manila's initiatives at Residenza Khaddiuggia have led to significant achievements especially in these 6 macro areas:

1. Environmental Sustainability

The implementation of rainwater harvesting and desalination systems reduced water waste by 40%. By eliminating plastic, the resort cut single-use plastic waste by 100%. Manila's efforts led to zero food waste through portion control, advance preparation and strategies to anticipate guests' requests before their arrival.

2. Economic & Social Impact

Manila has reduced food-related costs through all the strategies implemented. Her collaboration with local producers strengthened community bonds and boosted the local economy. Direct sales by guests to local producers have increased from at least 30%. Relationships with long-time suppliers improved, leading to better economic conditions and gifts for guests.

3. Deeper Community Connections

Local producers expressed gratitude and admiration, noting that no one had previously valued their contributions as Manila did. This deeper connection fostered mutual respect and recognition, enhancing community cohesion. Increased social media shares by these producers further promoted the resort.

4. Guest Satisfaction & Engagement

Guest reviews, both written and video, increased by more than 50%, reflecting high satisfaction. The innovative breakfast offerings, including vegan and gluten-free options, were well received even by guests without dietary restrictions. Parents, smart workers, artists and athletes of different generations appreciated the healthy and tasty meals that told the story of Pantelleria. The creative product presentations thrilled young and old alike.



5. Generational Collaboration

The involvement of Generation Z students from a tourism academy in creating social media content facilitated knowledge exchange between them and Manila (a Baby Boomer). This collaboration enriched the content and increased brand awareness and reputation, leading to at least a 35% increase in bookings.

6. Enhanced Guest Interaction & Conversion

Manila's presence on social media, combined with guest video testimonials, boosted brand awareness and reputation, increasing conversion rates (at least 30%). The personalized approach and genuine engagement made potential clients more likely to ask for more information and book directly.

Lessons Learned and Advice:

Reflecting on my journey, I've learned that sustainability is an ongoing, evolving process. Embracing change and innovation, the journey never truly ends. Building authentic relationships with guests and local producers has been crucial. I adapted traditional recipes to meet various dietary needs and engaged guests in sustainable practices. Efficient use of social media helped me share Pantelleria's story and our eco-friendly activities. Genuine connections make all the difference, benefiting both the business and the community.

Advice and Recommendations:

- **Accommodations:** personalize the guest experience, implement plastic-free solutions, water-saving technologies, and zero-waste initiatives. Continuously invest in training and use social media ethically to convey consistency and trust.
- **Destinations:** encourage partnerships between local businesses and accommodations to strengthen the local economy. Market your commitment to the environment to attract eco-conscious travelers.
- **Women of my age:** never stop learning and believe in yourself. Determination can overcome challenges and skepticism.





- **Young people:** have the courage to take risks, be hungry to learn continuously, and work with passion.
- **Local producers:** showcase your products and educate guests about sustainable practices, valuing trust-based relationships with partners.

This journey has been transformative, and I hope my experiences inspire others in hospitality.

Recognitions and Additional References

Manila's dedication to transforming Residenza Khadduggia into a model of sustainable and inclusive hospitality has not gone unnoticed. Her efforts have been recognized nationally, highlighting her sustainable and inclusive breakfast experience and her authentic connections with local producers. Now it's time to get the first international recognition as well.

Academic References:

Case Study in Sustainable Tourism Courses: Manila's initiatives are used as case studies in various tourism and hospitality courses at Italian & international both within academies and at the universities.

Mentions within Books:

Manila's best practices were mentioned within the book *Unconventional Breakfast* (on Amazon), the ultimate book dedicated to professionals in the tourism industry with strategies for creating reimagined local breakfasts even for guests with specific dietary needs.

Mentions within Hospitality Industry Press Releases

During the two online editions of the *Unconventional Breakfast Challenge* (2020-2021) -covid period- Manila participated among the contestants for the Sicily region, and although she had not won with the team, she had emerged as the moral winner because she never gave up despite the fact that her teammates had dropped out of the competition and she was not practical with technology (zoom and canva). Manila completed the challenge, with the help of the young students of IATH (International Academy of Tourism&Hospitality -Lake Como-), by





going so far as to create her first unconventional breakfast proposals, which she would then immediately incorporate once the accommodation reopened.

Testimonials and Guest Feedback:

Guest Reviews: overwhelmingly positive reviews on platforms such as Booking.com and on her facebook page, emphasizing the unique and sustainable guest experience.

Video Testimonials: different guest video testimonials praising the authentic local experiences and Manila’s personal touch in hospitality.

These mentions make Manila a true example of a woman of the boomer generation who never gave up, a resilient woman who did not let fear of failure stop her, who simply took action despite everything and everyone.

