



Singapore co-living platform Cove raises over US\$2m in seed round, eyes regional growth

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COVE, a newcomer in Singapore's co-living sector, has secured more than US\$2 million in seed funding to expand in South-east Asia and build-out its technology.

The round was led by investment firms from Asia and Europe – Indonesia's Venturra; Singapore's Investigate and Yuj Ventures, which is backed by The Xander Group; and Germany's Picus Capital. The lead investors were joined by Singapore venture capital funds Aetius Capital and Found Ventures, as well as various strategic angel investors.

Cove's [online listing platform](#) and tenant apps aim to make it hassle-free for tenants to rent affordable, high-quality rooms.

The startup invests in smart home technology, and uses an artificial intelligence (AI) tool to match flatmates based on their living habits, values and interests.

Cove has expanded to nearly 200 bedrooms in Singapore, and targets to grow this number by 10 times in 2020. It was founded a year ago through startup generator Antler.

To expand its inventory of rooms, the firm will work with corporate asset owners and developers to either repurpose underutilised buildings or purpose-build properties for co-living. Cove said on Tuesday that it has several developments, with 30-odd bedrooms each, in its pipeline set to launch in 2020.

Cove said it sees "huge potential" to use co-living to improve access to affordable homes that are near to city centres across South-east Asia. Demand for co-living has been driven by millennials, who place less importance on home ownership and are increasingly priced out of the purchase market, the firm said.

"Our founding team has had plenty of bad experiences living in shared flats. We are thus motivated to tackle this issue and provide millions of young people across South-east Asia with hassle-free affordable homes that can be booked at the click of a button," said Guillaume Castagne, Cove co-founder and chief executive officer. Mr Castagne was previously vice-president marketing at e-commerce unicorn Lazada.

All of Cove's properties come fully furnished with super-fast WiFi. An all-inclusive monthly rent includes the WiFi charges, a weekly cleaning service, and all taxes and utilities. There are no agent fees payable. Contract terms are flexible with a three-month minimum stay, and tenants can transfer between Cove properties or leave with 30 days' notice. Cove members also get access to regular social and networking events with other flatmates.