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 SANCHARAKA UDAWA | சஞ்சாரக உதாவ
 THE TRAVEL & TOURISM FAIR

2026



TRAVELTALK
 ASIA

SPECIAL EDITION

A Message from the Prime Minister Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Hon. Dr. Harini Amarasuriya

Sri Lanka's journey towards becoming a world-class tourism destination is one that requires the collective effort of government, industry, and the communities that welcome visitors to our shores. Sancharaka Udawa, exemplifies precisely that spirit of collaboration.



Hon. Dr. Harini Amarasuriya

Tourism is not simply an economic sector — it is a bridge between cultures, a driver of livelihoods across every corner of our island, and a reflection of who we are as a nation. The Government of Sri Lanka is firmly committed to creating an enabling environment where the industry can grow sustainably and inclusively — through sound policy, investment in infrastructure, and the empowerment of every stakeholder along the tourism value chain.

In an increasingly complex global arena, Sri Lanka must position itself with clarity and confidence. We have a compelling story to tell — of natural beauty, cultural depth, warm hospitality, and extraordinary diversity within a small island. It is the responsibility of government and industry alike to ensure that story reaches the right audiences, consistently and powerfully.

I commend SLAITO for their leadership in organising this important event and extend my best wishes to all participants for a productive and successful Sancharaka Udawa 2026.

Chairman Organizing Committee Sancharaka Udawa

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I welcome you to Sancharaka Udawa, Sri Lanka's premier travel and tourism trade exhibition.

This year marks a truly significant milestone in the event's journey. We are delighted to host over 250 exhibitors, representing the very best of Sri Lanka's tourism industry - from hoteliers and tour operators to destination experience providers and allied services. What makes this edition particularly exciting is that, for the first time, we will welcome over 100 international buyers to our shores, a testament to the growing confidence the global travel trade has in Sri Lanka as a destination of choice.



Nishad Wijetunga

Beyond the exhibition floor, we have curated a high-level panel discussion featuring distinguished international experts who will share their insights on Destination Marketing and Positioning, a subject of profound relevance at this moment in Sri Lanka's tourism journey. As we work collectively to strengthen our destination's profile on the world stage, conversations of this nature are not merely timely, they are essential.

Sancharaka Udawa has grown from strength to strength over the years, and I have no doubt that this edition will be no exception. We believe there is something here for everyone, whether you are a seasoned industry professional, an emerging entrepreneur, a policymaker, or a travel trade buyer exploring new opportunities in this remarkable island nation.

This is, without question, one of the most important events in Sri Lanka's tourism calendar, and I invite each of you to be a part of it.

Nishad Wijetunga
 Chairman, Organizing Committee — Sancharaka Udawa
 Immediate Past President, SLAITO

President Sri Lanka Association Of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO)

Welcome to the Sancharaka Udawa 2026. This edition marks a significant milestone for our annual exhibition, and I am pleased to share some of this year's highlights.

For the first time in the history of Sancharaka Udawa, we welcome 100 hosted international buyers to Sri Lanka. These buyers represent real business opportunities for our exhibitors, and I encourage all participants to make the most of every interaction.

This year's Sancharaka Udawa arrives at a defining moment. The global geopolitical landscape remains complex and unpredictable — shifting travel patterns, economic pressures, and regional uncertainties influence traveller behaviour and source market performance. Yet within this complexity lies opportunity, and it is precisely at times like these that Sri Lanka must stand firm in its commitment to consistent, robust, and strategic tourism marketing.

In this context, the importance of consistent and strategic destination marketing cannot be overstated. Sri Lanka cannot afford a passive approach. We must be present, competitive, and compelling in every key source market, every single year, regardless of the external environment. A strong, well coordinated marketing strategy is not a luxury — it is a necessity.

This year's programme reflects that understanding. A panel discussion on Destination Marketing will bring together international industry leaders and stakeholders to address how Sri Lanka can sharpen its positioning, strengthen its brand, and build long-term resilience in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.

SLAITO's role in Sri Lanka Tourism is crucial. As the primary association representing inbound tour operators, our membership is responsible for bringing the largest share of international visitors to Sri Lanka through the global travel trade network. Sancharaka Udawa is a platform to strengthen that link — to showcase what Sri Lanka offers, to build new partnerships, and to reinforce the value chain that sustains our entire industry.

I thank our sponsors, exhibitors, and partners for their continued commitment. I also extend a warm welcome to our international buyers — your presence here this year is genuinely significant, and we hope Sri Lanka exceeds every expectation.

Nalin Jayasundera
 President SLAITO



Nalin Jayasundera



Experience the True Essence of Spice

Sri Lanka has long been known as the heart of the world's spice trade, with spices shaping its culture, economy, and global identity for centuries. Honoring this legacy, Spice Ceylon was created as a fully immersive educational experience, featuring Sri Lanka's first dedicated Spice Museum, guided Spice Grove visits, and an authentic Sri Lankan restaurant, offering a memorable journey through flavor, history, and tradition.



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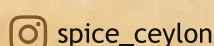
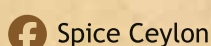
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THE TRAVEL & TOURISM FAIR 13th EDITION



A Message from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism

It gives me great pleasure to extend my warm greetings and best wishes to all participants, exhibitors, tourism professionals, and organizers of Sancharaka Udawa 2026 Sri Lanka's premier Business to Business travel trade mart and a significant platform within our national tourism industry.

Sancharaka Udawa 2026 continues to play an important role in bringing together tourism stakeholders from across the country, creating opportunities for networking, partnerships, investment promotion, and industry collaboration. It reflects the resilience and forward-looking vision of Sri Lanka's tourism sector.



Hon. Vijitha Herath

Sri Lanka's tourism industry stands today at a transformative moment. We are committed to building a tourism sector that is sustainable, inclusive, people-centered, environmentally responsible, and nationally beneficial.

Tourism is not merely an economic activity; it is a powerful national development tool that contributes toward employment generation, foreign exchange earnings, rural empowerment, cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, entrepreneurship, and international cooperation.

I particularly welcome this year's focus on Destination Marketing, as it is essential for both government and industry to work together in strategically positioning Sri Lanka in the global tourism marketplace through innovation, quality experiences, sustainability, and strong international partnerships.

It is also my sincere hope that Sancharaka Udawa will one day emerge as the largest and most influential tourism travel mart in South Asia. The Government fully supports this vision and remains committed to strengthening Sri Lanka's global tourism presence. I congratulate the Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO) for their continued leadership and contribution toward the advancement of Sri Lanka tourism.

I wish all participants and organizers every success for a productive and successful Sancharaka Udawa 2026.

Hon. Vijitha Herath
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Bringing the World to Sri Lanka

As Chairman of the Sri Lanka Convention Bureau, it is a particular privilege to be associated with an edition that marks a genuine turning point for this much-valued event.

The Sri Lanka Convention Bureau is delighted to have partnered with Sri Lanka Tourism in facilitating all international buyers and visitors who join us this year — a first in the thirteen-year history of Sancharaka Udawa. For the Convention Bureau, the principle of bringing key international decision-makers directly to Sri Lanka is one we know well.



Dheera Hettiarachchi

There is simply no substitute for experiencing a destination firsthand — and we are confident that every buyer who walks through the doors of this exhibition will leave with a far richer and more compelling understanding of what Sri Lanka has to offer the world.

Showcasing Sri Lanka is not a one-time effort. It requires consistent presence, strategic relationship-building, and the kind of direct engagement that events like Sancharaka Udawa make possible. The travel trade is the backbone of international arrivals, and investing in these connections is investing in the long-term health of our entire tourism ecosystem.

I commend SLAITO for their vision in elevating this year's programme, and I look forward to the meaningful business and relationships that will emerge from Sancharaka Udawa 2026.

Dheera Hettiarachchi
Chairman
Sri Lanka Convention Bureau

Message from the Deputy Minister of Tourism

I am delighted to extend my greetings to all participants of Sancharaka Udawa 2026 — a platform that sits at the very heart of Sri Lanka's tourism

As an academic who has dedicated much of my career to the study and development of tourism, I have long believed that sustainable growth in this sector must be rooted in research, data, and a deep understanding of global trends. Sancharaka Udawa embodies this philosophy — it is a space where knowledge, commerce, and collaboration converge with genuine purpose.

Our vision is clear. But realising that vision demands a tourism ecosystem that is inclusive, well-trained, and internationally competitive. That means investing in our people, diversifying our product offering, and ensuring that the benefits of tourism reach communities beyond our major urban centres

Events like Sancharaka Udawa are not peripheral to this mission — they are fundamental to it. I commend SLAITO for their continued leadership and I wish all participants productive and meaningful engagements.

Hon. Prof. Ruwan Ranasinghe
Deputy Minister of Tourism
Sri Lanka



Hon. Prof. Ruwan Ranasinghe

Where Strategy Meets Opportunity

It is a pleasure to extend my greetings to all participants of Sancharaka Udawa 2026 and to congratulate SLAITO on delivering what is, without question, the most significant edition of this exhibition to date.

The Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau is proud to be a key facilitator of the 100 hosted international buyers attending Sancharaka Udawa 2026 for the very first time. This milestone initiative reflects our continued commitment to ensuring that Sri Lanka's tourism product is positioned directly in front of the right global audiences - the buyers, operators, and decision-makers who influence travel flows worldwide. Bringing them to Sri Lanka and enabling direct engagement with our industry stakeholders in a single platform represents one of the most effective and results-driven forms of destination marketing.

Building on this, we have taken deliberate steps to elevate this year's edition beyond a traditional trade exhibition. The introduction of structured B2B engagement platforms, targeted buyer-seller matching, and curated networking opportunities has enhanced the overall quality of interactions and business outcomes. Importantly, the increased participation of international buyers is a strategic step towards positioning Sancharaka Udawa as a future international travel mart, capable of attracting sustained global attention and participation in the years ahead.

Sri Lanka's tourism sector is currently on a strong upward trajectory, and our strategic focus remains on diversifying source markets, improving tourism yield, and building consistent year-round demand. Sancharaka Udawa 2026 contributes meaningfully to all three objectives. The conversations initiated here, the partnerships established, and the impressions formed by our international guests will translate directly into increased bookings, arrivals, and revenue for the country.

We remain firmly committed to supporting SLAITO and the broader travel trade as vital partners in achieving our national tourism ambitions. Initiatives of this nature demonstrate the power of collaboration between the public and private sectors in strengthening Sri Lanka's global tourism positioning. I wish all exhibitors and buyers a highly productive and successful two days.

Buddhika Hewawasam
Chairman
Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority
Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau



Buddhika Hewawasam



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Set along the golden coast of Negombo, Jetwing Sea offers a refreshed take on a much-loved escape, where light-filled spaces and life by the beach shape an easy, welcoming stay, elevated by legendary Sri Lankan hospitality.

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With the ocean always in frame and the shore just steps away, Jetwing Sea invites you to check-in, unwind and let Negombo surprise you.



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There are events that mark time, and there are events that shape it. Sancharaka Udawa, now in its 13th edition, has quietly and consistently been the latter.

What began in the aftermath of a nation finding its footing, a modest trade show of 100 stalls held in a banquet hall, driven by a handful of passionate industry believers has evolved into one of the most significant dates in Sri Lanka's tourism calendar. That journey, in many ways, mirrors Sri Lanka's own: resilient, determined, and increasingly confident in its place on the world stage.

This year, however, feels different. And it should.

For the first time in Sancharaka Udawa's history, over 100 international buyers are walking through these doors; not as observers, but as active participants in shaping Sri Lanka's tourism future. That single fact represents a strategic leap that the industry has long needed. Alongside more than 250 exhibitors and a high-level panel discussion on destination marketing and positioning, this edition signals that we are no longer simply participating in the global conversation about travel, we are hosting it.

Sri Lanka's tourism recovery has been remarkable. But recovery is a floor, not a ceiling. The real work of diversifying markets, improving yield, and building the kind of sustained international demand that transforms an industry requires exactly the kind of deliberate, strategic engagement that this exhibition now represents.

As an industry, we have always known that Sri Lanka sells itself to those who experience it. The challenge has been getting the right people here. This year, we



are doing precisely that. To every exhibitor, buyer, and industry partner gathered here the opportunity in front of us is real. Let us make the most of it.

Dinushka

Dinushka Chandrasena
Editor



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How it All Began: The Story Behind Sancharaka Udawa

As we celebrate the 13th edition of Sancharaka Udawa, I find myself reflecting on its beginnings — and on how it all came to life.

2009 marked a significant milestone in our nation's history with the ending of an internal conflict that had endured for nearly three decades. That dawn brought with it enormous hope and anticipation for tourism — not only from the government, but from a core of patriotic industry partners who had remained steadfastly committed to seeing the industry through its most challenging years and back onto the world map of tourism.



Nilmin Nanayakkara

A significant opportunity for growth and revival became evident, driven by a number of passionate hoteliers and Destination Management Companies who were determined to sustain and advance the industry despite the adversity of those long years. It was clear, during this period, that many small and medium-scale accommodation providers and service operators needed greater support and exposure to reach the next level. They had the product — but lacked the means to effectively market themselves.

Recognising this need, and during my tenure as President of SLAITO, I proposed the idea of organising a trade show that would provide a dedicated platform for these smaller enterprises to showcase their offerings to industry buyers and the general public alike. The timing was also fortuitous — domestic tourism was experiencing a surge, as Sri Lankans felt a renewed sense of freedom and enthusiasm to explore their own country. This created an additional and very real opportunity for these businesses.

The proposal received the full support of my committee, and SLAITO resolved to proceed. After considering several options, we collectively agreed on the name Sancharaka Udawa — and with that, a new chapter began.

Promoting the event and building confidence among potential exhibitors was, initially, no small challenge. The brand was new, and its scale and quality were yet to be established. To overcome this, the committee undertook extensive personal outreach. We formed three teams that travelled from Colombo every weekend to various parts of the country, personally inviting participation and encouraging exhibitors to take a chance on something new. Stall rates were kept at a nominal level — just sufficient to cover costs and build momentum. We were also fortunate to secure several sponsors, with Sri Lanka Tourism providing the main sponsorship.

If I recall correctly, that inaugural edition featured approximately 100 stalls and was held at the Ceylon Intercontinental banquet hall and its adjoining lawn. The exhibitors represented a wonderfully diverse range of accommodation providers and service operators from across the island — including some truly unique and high-quality offerings from remote and lesser-known corners of the country.

The success of that very first edition was evident in the warmth and enthusiasm of the feedback we received from exhibitors. This was further reinforced by the second edition, where demand increased significantly — stall space sold out quickly, and securing sponsorships became considerably easier. The formula had worked. The idea had found its moment.

Since then, Sancharaka Udawa has grown steadily year after year, evolving into the prominent and respected platform it is today, while never losing sight of its original purpose — to support emerging investors and stakeholders within the tourism industry.

I extend my warmest wishes for the continued success of this 13th edition, and sincerely hope that Sancharaka Udawa will keep growing, reaching new heights, and expanding its horizons in the years — and decades — to come.

Nilmin Nanayakkara
Past President, SLAITO

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Sri Lanka Tourism: What's Next... And What's Missing?

A Defining Conversation on Destination Marketing Takes Centre Stage at Sancharaka Udawa 2026

At a time when destinations across the globe are locked in fierce competition for the attention of the discerning, experience-hungry traveller, Sri Lanka finds itself at a compelling and consequential crossroads. The island has never lacked for beauty, diversity, or authenticity. What it has long needed and what today's industry leaders are openly acknowledging is a sharper, more strategically coherent answer to a deceptively simple question: how does Sri Lanka position itself in a world where every destination is telling its story louder than ever before?

That question is at the heart of one of the most anticipated sessions of Sancharaka Udawa 2026- a panel discussion titled "Sri Lanka Tourism: What's Next... And What's Missing? — From a Destination Marketing Perspective". It is a session that has been months in the making, and one that the industry has been looking forward to with considerable anticipation.

Commenting on the discussion Harith Perera, Project Chairman Sancharaka Udawa said "Destination marketing is not just about beautiful imagery and catchy taglines. It is about strategy, consistency, and a clear understanding of who we are speaking to and why they should choose Sri Lanka over every other destination competing for their time and money. This panel brings together people who have done this at scale, across markets — and I believe their insights will be genuinely transformative for our industry."

Guiding the conversation is Dananath Fernando, CEO of the Advocata Institute and one of Sri Lanka's most respected voices in policy and economic analysis. A founding member of Advocata, an Eisenhower Global Fellow, and a member of the TikTok Trust & Safety Advisory Council for South Asia, Fernando brings

intellectual rigour and a talent for distilling complexity into clarity — qualities that will be invaluable in steering a discussion of this depth and ambition.

Meet The Panellists

Katherine Droga arrives at this discussion with credentials that are difficult to match. Founder of Droga & Co. and a globally recognised authority in destination marketing and wellness tourism, she brings over two decades of experience shaping tourism strategy, branding, and industry development across Australia and international markets. For more than ten years, she held senior executive positions at Tourism Australia, leading international marketing, strategic partnerships, and major events — contributing significantly to one of the world's most admired destination brand stories. She also serves as Chair of the Global Wellness Institute's Wellness Tourism Initiative, placing her at the forefront of one of the world's fastest-growing segments. Her gift lies in translating global travel trends and consumer insights into commercially driven, actionable strategies — precisely what Sri Lanka needs at this moment.

Shouvik Roy, Founder of Shouvik Roy Advisory, is a figure whose influence on destination branding in South Asia is nothing short of remarkable. With over three decades in advertising and marketing — including a landmark tenure leading creative operations at Ogilvy India — Roy has spent more than twenty years working at the intersection of culture, identity, and tourism. He was closely associated with two of India's most iconic and enduring destination campaigns: Incredible India and Atithi



Katherine Droga

Devo Bhava, as well as state-level tourism initiatives for Assam and Uttarakhand. His work helped translate the vast complexity of India's cultural diversity into a cohesive and globally compelling brand narrative. His presence on this panel offers Sri Lanka a rare opportunity to learn from someone who has built a

destination brand from the inside out — and at extraordinary scale.

Dillip Rajakarier brings to the table a perspective shaped at the very summit of global hospitality. As Group CEO of Minor International and CEO of Minor Hotels, he presides over a portfolio of more than 640 properties across 57 countries — a company that had just twelve hotels when he joined in 2007. His trajectory from Chief Finance & Investment Officer to the driving force behind one of the world's largest and fastest-growing hospitality groups is a story of strategic vision executed with discipline and precision.

A former senior figure at Orient-Express Hotels (now Belmond), Rajakarier is also a passionate advocate for digital transformation, having positioned Minor Hotels as an industry trailblazer in leveraging technology for operational excellence. His lens on destination competitiveness is shaped by what it actually takes to commit capital, build brands, and deliver world-class guest experiences in markets across the globe.

Jasmeet Singh, Chief Business Officer at MakeMyTrip Group (NASDAQ: MMYT), leads the Holidays & Experiences Strategic



Dilip Rajakarier

Business Unit at one of Asia's most powerful travel platforms — and his voice in this conversation carries the weight of real consumer data at massive scale. With full P&L ownership over a business he is transforming into a scalable, integrated, high-impact platform, Singh has spent over a decade at MakeMyTrip contributing to foundational business building and strategic growth. He also champions one of the industry's most distinctive initiatives: a team of over 2,500 Women Holiday Experts, a work-from-home model empowering women across India to

build meaningful careers in travel. His perspective on what today's Indian traveller — the segment that represents perhaps the single greatest immediate opportunity for Sri Lanka — is seeking from a destination is invaluable.

Rounding out the panel is Buddhika Hewawasam, Chairman of both the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB) and the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA). A senior aviation and tourism professional with a distinguished background at SriLankan Airlines and IATA, Hewawasam brings deep expertise in aviation strategy, marketing, and training to his role as the country's most senior tourism official. His presence anchors the discussion in the realities and responsibilities of national tourism governance — and ensures that the insights generated today have a direct line to policy and practice.

Together, these five voices — moderated with precision by Fernando — represent a confluence of global expertise, regional insight, and local accountability that is rare on any stage. What

unfolds in the next ninety minutes is not merely a panel discussion. It is, in many ways, a mirror held up to Sri Lanka's tourism industry — and an invitation to see, clearly and honestly, both what is working and what must change.

The conversation starts now.



Harith Perera



Dananath Fernando



Shouvik Roy

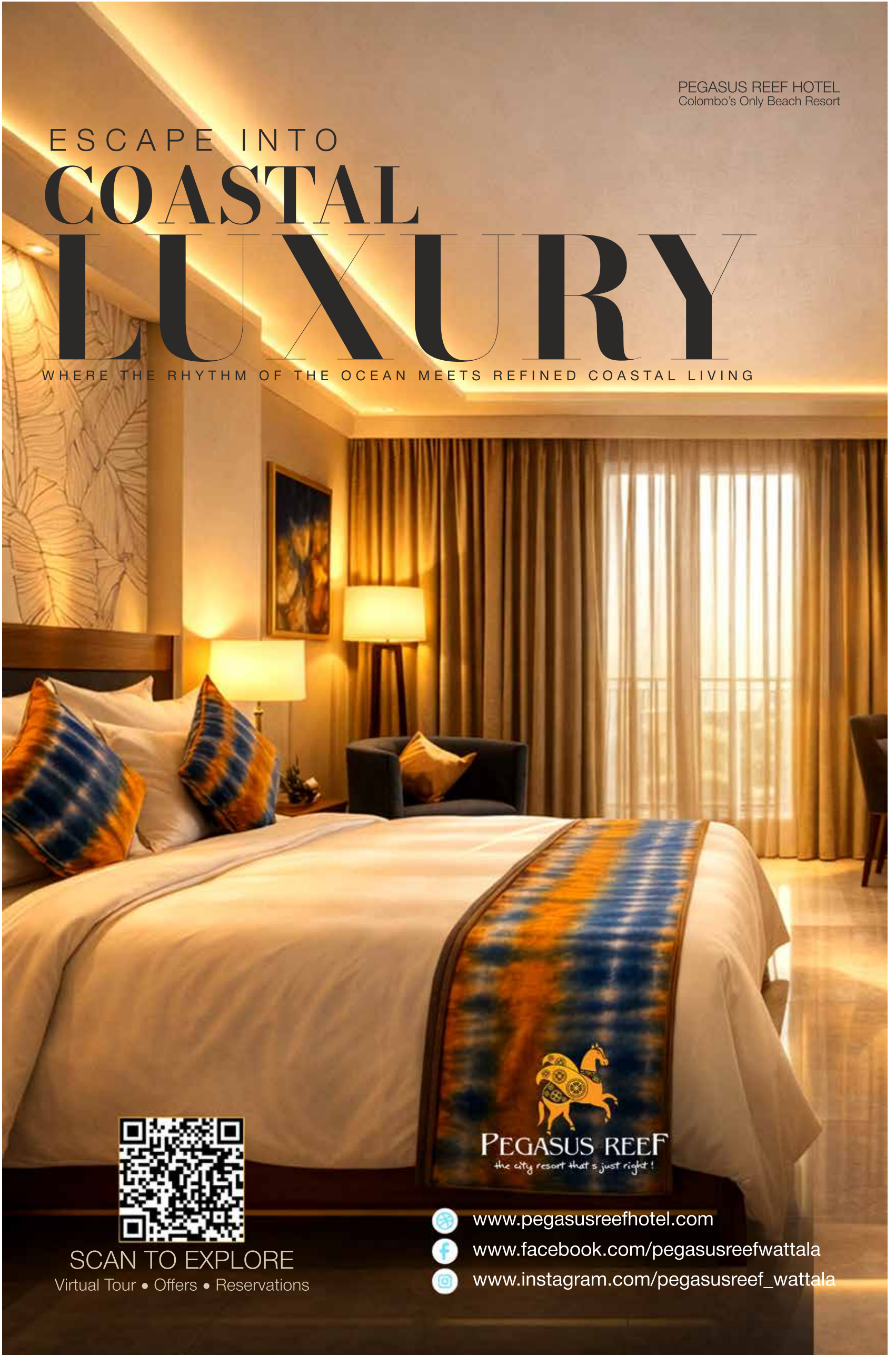


Jasmeet Singh

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Aitken Spence Conventions & Exhibitions (ASCE) Delivering Impact Through Professional Event Excellence

Aitken Spence Conventions & Exhibitions (ASCE) has remained at the forefront of Sri Lanka's MICE and event management industry for over 30 years, delivering world-class events with professionalism, consistency, and purpose. With more than three decades of uninterrupted service, ASCE continues to set industry benchmarks as one of Sri Lanka's most established and trusted event organisers.



ASCE successfully organises events that create meaningful engagement and impact across more than 150,000 lives annually. This reach extends beyond event participants and visitors to include suppliers, employees, service providers, and a wide network of industry stakeholders—demonstrating the broader economic and social value generated through every event.

Its service excellence has positioned ASCE as the only company in Sri Lanka's MICE and event management industry to receive the highest number of industry accolades, including Presidential Awards as the Best Professional Conference Organizer in Sri Lanka in 2007 and 2008, followed by the Hall of Fame recognition in 2009. ASCE was also honoured with the Sri Lanka Tourism Award as the Best Professional Conference Organizer in 2011 and again in 2024.

As a fully-fledged end-to-end MICE operator, ASCE delivers integrated solutions across Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions. This capability is

reinforced through its professional membership classifications with the Sri Lanka Association of Professional Conference, Exhibition & Event Organisers (SLAPCEO), where ASCE is recognised across multiple specialist categories: Professional Conference Organizer (PCO) for Meetings and Conferences, Professional Exhibition Organizer (PEO) for Exhibitions, Destination Management Company (DMC) for Incentives, and Event Management Company (EMC) for broader event solutions.

ASCE's operational excellence is further strengthened by a highly qualified team with one of the highest concentrations of event-industry-trained professionals in Sri Lanka. Its staff have undergone internationally recognised training through institutions such as IAPCO, ICCA, and the Sri Lanka Convention Bureau (SLCB). Across marketing, operations, finance, and administration, frontline teams are equipped with specialised academic and professional qualifications in marketing, finance, business administration, leisure and hospitality,

and event management.

As a responsible and compliant corporate entity, ASCE is registered with the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) and remains fully compliant with national fiscal obligations, reflecting its commitment to transparency, accountability, and formal sector leadership.

ASCE works closely with key public and private sector institutions that shape Sri Lanka's tourism and events landscape, including SLAPCEO, the Sri Lanka Convention Bureau (SLCB), the Tourism Industry Skills Council (TISC), the Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO), the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB), and Uva Wellassa University. These collaborations support industry development, skills enhancement, destination promotion, and long-term sector sustainability.

At its core, ASCE is driven by a strong commitment to social enterprise and sustainable growth. With initiatives centred on People and Planet, the company continues to champion responsible event practices that create lasting value for communities, industries, and the environment.

Aitken Spence Conventions & Exhibitions is more than an event organiser—it is a trusted industry partner shaping experiences, enabling connections, and driving progress through professional event excellence.

Browns Hotels & Resorts Raises the Bar with Quintessential Bartender 2026

Browns Hotels & Resorts, in collaboration with Periceyl, turned up the energy and artistry with the successful conclusion of Quintessential Bartender 2026 — an inter-hotel bartending competition created to spotlight, sharpen, and celebrate the group's finest talent.

Bringing together bartenders from 16 Browns Hotels & Resorts properties across 10 iconic destinations, the competition offered a stage for personality, precision, storytelling, and skill, where the best bartenders from each resort went head-to-head in pursuit of the ultimate title.

The journey began with regional rounds hosted at Hotel Sigiriya, Club Hotel Dolphin Negombo, and Dickwella Resort & Spa, where competitors showcased their talents in both Classic and Innovative Cocktail categories before a respected judging panel. From these rounds, the top contenders earned their place in the grand finale at The Eden Beruwala, where the atmosphere was electric.

The grand finale was graced by Eksath Wijeratne, CEO of Browns Hotels & Resorts, and Senaka Amarathunaga, Director General Manager of Periceyl, reinforcing the importance of developing talent and driving excellence within the hospitality industry.

The distinguished judging panel featured Trevin Gomes, Managing Director of Cargills Retail and a respected pioneer in Sri Lankan hospitality; Ishadi Amanda, Mrs World 2024 1st Runner-Up and Mrs Sri Lanka for Mrs World 2024; Dushan Umayanga, All Island Flair Bartending Champion 2023 and Sri Lanka's Got Talent Semifinalist 2024; Rodger Peterez, Beverage Expert and Trainer at Periceyl; and Kanishka Jayathunga, Head of Learning & Development at Browns Hotels & Resorts.

Adding to the spirit of the evening, General Managers



from across the Browns Hotels & Resorts portfolio, together with hotel executive teams and Food & Beverage Managers, were present to cheer on their representatives and stand behind their teams in a strong show of unity, encouragement, and camaraderie.

What unfolded throughout the competition was a masterclass in modern mixology. There were cocktails inspired by Avurudu traditions, creations rooted in medicinal and wellness concepts, botanical blends layered with fresh herbs and aromatics, smoky and complex serves, and technique-driven drinks executed with finesse. Some competitors brought flair, drama, and showmanship to the stage, while others brought elegance, balance, and powerful storytelling. Local ingredients met international trends, proving that Sri Lankan bartending talent can stand confidently on any global platform.

Speaking at the finale, Eksath Wijeratne, CEO of Browns Hotels & Resorts, stated: "The level of talent displayed throughout this competition was truly inspiring. What stood out most was the passion, discipline, and originality shown by our teams. These are the individuals shaping guest experiences every day, and Quintessential Bartender 2026 has shown that our internal talent holds extraordinary potential. It gives us great confidence for the future of hospitality at Browns Hotels & Resorts."

The competition crowned three exceptional winners

whose creativity and consistency set them apart: Champion – Imalshi Kaushalya of Newburgh Ella – The Tea Factory Resort, 1st Runner-Up – Nimesh Denuwan of Club Hotel Dolphin, 2nd Runner-Up – Chamindu Nimrada of Dickwella Resort & Spa.

The concept behind Quintessential Bartender 2026, in collaboration with Periceyl, was driven by Pahan Wijendra, Cluster Beverage Manager; Baba Carrim, Head of Business Excellence; and Kanishka Jayathunga, Head of Learning & Development, with the vision of strengthening internal capabilities, uplifting beverage standards across the group, and creating a meaningful platform for associates to showcase their creativity and grow their craft.

The evening concluded on a high note with a fellowship gathering, where participants, winners, management teams, and supporters came together to celebrate the spirit of the competition, shared success, and the strong culture of talent development within Browns Hotels & Resorts.

With talent poured into every glass and passion behind every performance, Quintessential Bartender 2026 has firmly established itself as a signature platform within Browns Hotels & Resorts — one that raises the bar for excellence, innovation, and opportunity.

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Classic Travels: Three Decades of Shaping Sri Lanka's Travel Story From the World to the Island, and the Island to the World

In the landscape of Sri Lanka's travel and tourism industry, few names carry the weight of history, consistency, and quiet authority that Classic Travel does. Part of the prestigious Expolanka Holdings PLC one of Sri Lanka's most respected conglomerates; Classic Travel has spent more than three decades building something that is increasingly rare in any industry: a genuine legacy of trust.



Sabry Bahaudeen

Founded in 1994 and IATA accredited, the company has grown from its Colombo headquarters into a multi-branch operation with a presence in Hambantota, Galle, Ratnapura, Kandy, Beruwala, and even offshore in Bangladesh and the Maldives. It holds a distinction that speaks volumes about its commitment to its customers: one of the only travel agency in Sri Lanka open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year — a promise that no journey, no itinerary, and no traveller's question is ever left unanswered.

At the helm of this operation is Sabry Bahaudeen, Director/ Chief Commercial Officer of Classic Travel and Chief Commercial Officer of the Expolanka Leisure Cluster — a leader whose name has become synonymous with the highest standards of travel services in Sri Lanka. With over two and a half decades dedicated to building and growing Classic Travel, Bahaudeen has not merely witnessed the evolution of Sri Lanka's travel industry; in many ways, he has helped shape it.

A Dual Identity: Outbound Excellence and Inbound Ambition

What makes Classic Travel's story particularly compelling

is the breadth of its vision. While the company has long been celebrated as the undisputed leader in outbound travel — consistently recognised as the number one travel agent in Sri Lanka by many of the world's leading airlines — it has with equal conviction invested in the inbound story through its sister operation, Classic Destinations, the dedicated inbound travel arm of the Expolanka Leisure Cluster.

Together, these two entities represent a full-circle approach to travel: connecting Sri Lankans to the world, and connecting the world to Sri Lanka.

On the outbound side, Classic Travel's dominance is well documented. For over three decades, Classic Travel has been at the forefront of the travel sector, providing unparalleled service and creating exceptional travel experiences for its clients — consistently recognised as the number one travel agent in Sri Lanka by many of the world's leading airlines. That leadership was most recently validated on the global stage when Classic Travel was named Sri Lanka's Travel Agency of the Year 2025 for the second consecutive year at the World Travel Awards, an accolade widely regarded as the Oscars of the travel industry. Accepting the honour, Bahaudeen expressed a sentiment that captures the company's ethos: "These awards reaffirm our commitment to delivering world-class travel experiences and elevating Sri Lanka's reputation as a premier travel hub."

On the inbound front, Classic Destinations has been making moves of its own that signal serious intent. In a landmark appointment that placed the company on the

national and international stage simultaneously, Classic Destinations was appointed as the Official Hospitality Partner for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup matches hosted in Sri Lanka — a role that encompassed hotel accommodation for all visiting teams, match and ICC officials, VIP hospitality, transportation logistics, and comprehensive event services. It was a complex, high-visibility mandate, and one that the company met with the professionalism that has become its hallmark. "We are humbled and proud to be entrusted with this responsibility for an event of such global significance," said Bahaudeen at the time — words that reflected both the gravity of the occasion and the confidence of an organisation that has earned the right to be trusted with it

The company has also been recognised as a Great Place to Work for four consecutive years — an acknowledgement that its culture of excellence extends inward as much as outward, and that the team behind the brand is as much a part of the story as the accolades it has earned.

Classic Travel's dedication to delivering outstanding customer service has earned it not only a loyal clientele but also numerous accolades throughout its history. Bahaudeen himself has articulated the spirit that underpins all of it: "This reflects the company's ongoing efforts to innovate and set new benchmarks in the travel industry. This victory would not have been possible without the continued trust and support of our valued stakeholders — clients, partners, and employees."

At Sancharaka Udawa 2026, Classic Travel is not merely an exhibitor. It is, in every sense, a symbol of what Sri Lanka's travel industry can achieve when vision, commitment, and consistency are sustained over time.

Built on Vision, Rooted in Values: The Jetwing Story Five Decades of Hospitality Excellence — and a Legacy That Continues to Soar

From its humble beginnings in 1973, Jetwing has grown into one of Sri Lanka's most formidable and respected names in hospitality and leisure. A stalwart of both the local and international business landscape, the company has built its reputation on the creation and stewardship of a distinguished portfolio of properties — properties that have earned widespread acclaim for their commitment to responsible, sustainable, and nature-based tourism. It is a legacy that stands as a fitting testament to the visionary leadership of Jetwing's founding Chairman, the late Herbert Cooray, whose values continue to guide the organisation he built from the ground up.

Through its travel arm, Jetwing Travels, the company has spent more than a quarter of a century delivering the very best in destination management solutions. An extensive network of luxurious hotels and idyllic properties, a rich array of diverse itineraries, and a team with an enviably intimate knowledge of Sri Lanka's many charms have together positioned Jetwing Travels as the ultimate guide to this paradise isle. That



standing has been recognised through numerous accolades — both nationally and internationally — affirming the company's place at the pinnacle of Sri Lankan tourism.

Yet Jetwing has never been content to rest on its laurels. Today, the company continues to soar — honouring its entrepreneurial legacy through new ventures and strategic partnerships that are reshaping its horizons. By integrating its core strengths in hotels and tourism with an ever-expanding portfolio of services — from outbound package tours and IATA-accredited ticketing to event management and inbound tour operations — Jetwing remains firmly ahead of the curve, anticipating and responding to the evolving needs of a global clientele with the agility and foresight that have always defined it.

At the heart of this dynamism, however, lies something that no accolade can fully capture: the warmth and sincerity of true Sri Lankan hospitality. With a long-established reputation for legendary service, Jetwing's team of committed travel professionals strives tirelessly — from arrival to departure — to ensure that every guest's experience exceeds



expectation. It is a promise delivered not as a corporate obligation, but with the kind of genuine enthusiasm that can only come from people who truly love what they do and the island they call home.

For Jetwing is, at its very essence, a family — a family-owned Sri Lankan company whose culture is as firmly rooted in family values today as it was when Herbert Cooray first laid its foundations. There is a saying that the best way to

experience a country is by travelling with a local family, and at Jetwing, that sentiment rings truer than anywhere else. When you entrust your Sri Lankan journey to Jetwing, you are not simply engaging a travel company — you are being welcomed into a legacy of care, excellence, and heartfelt hospitality that spans more than fifty years.

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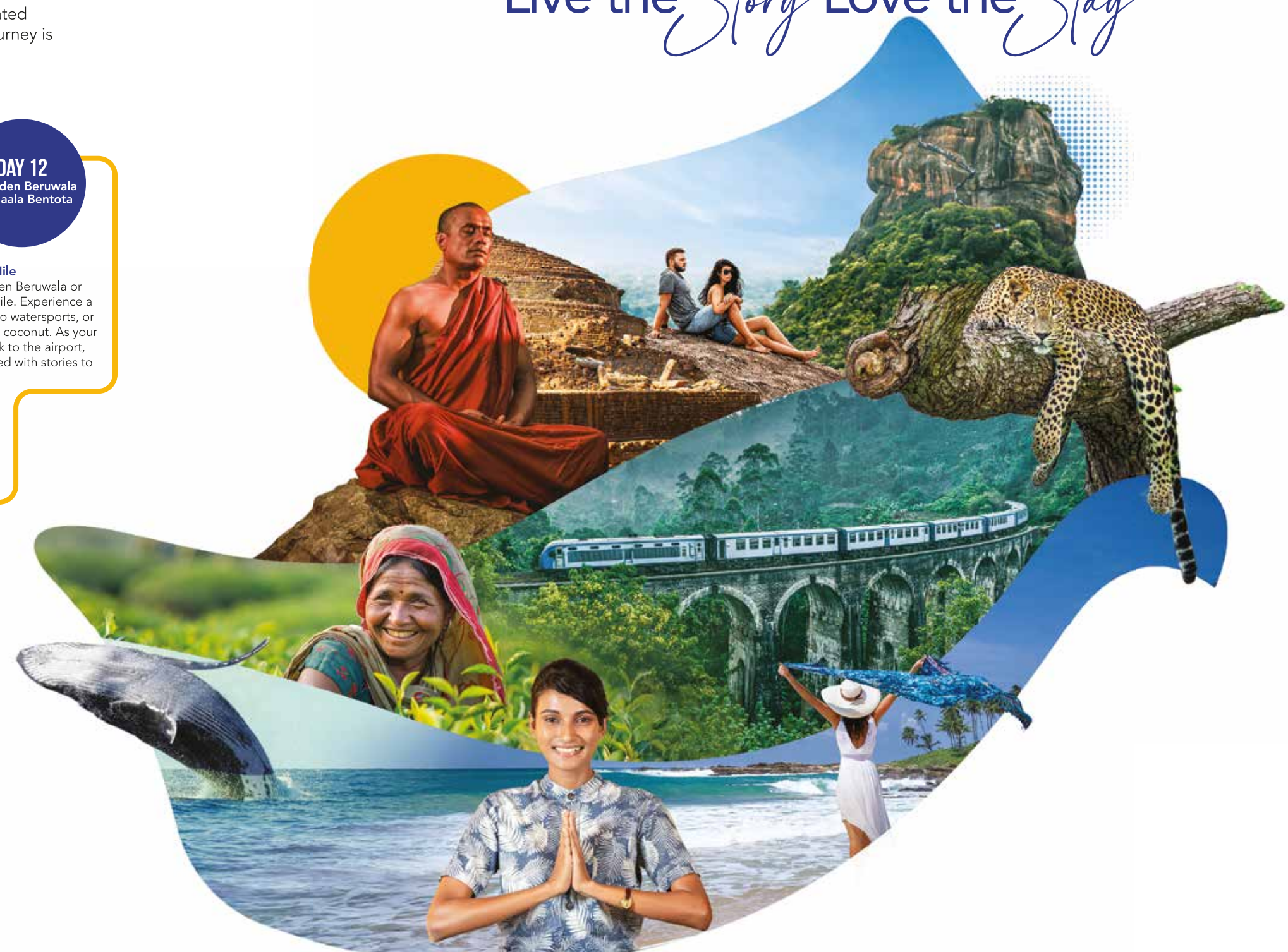
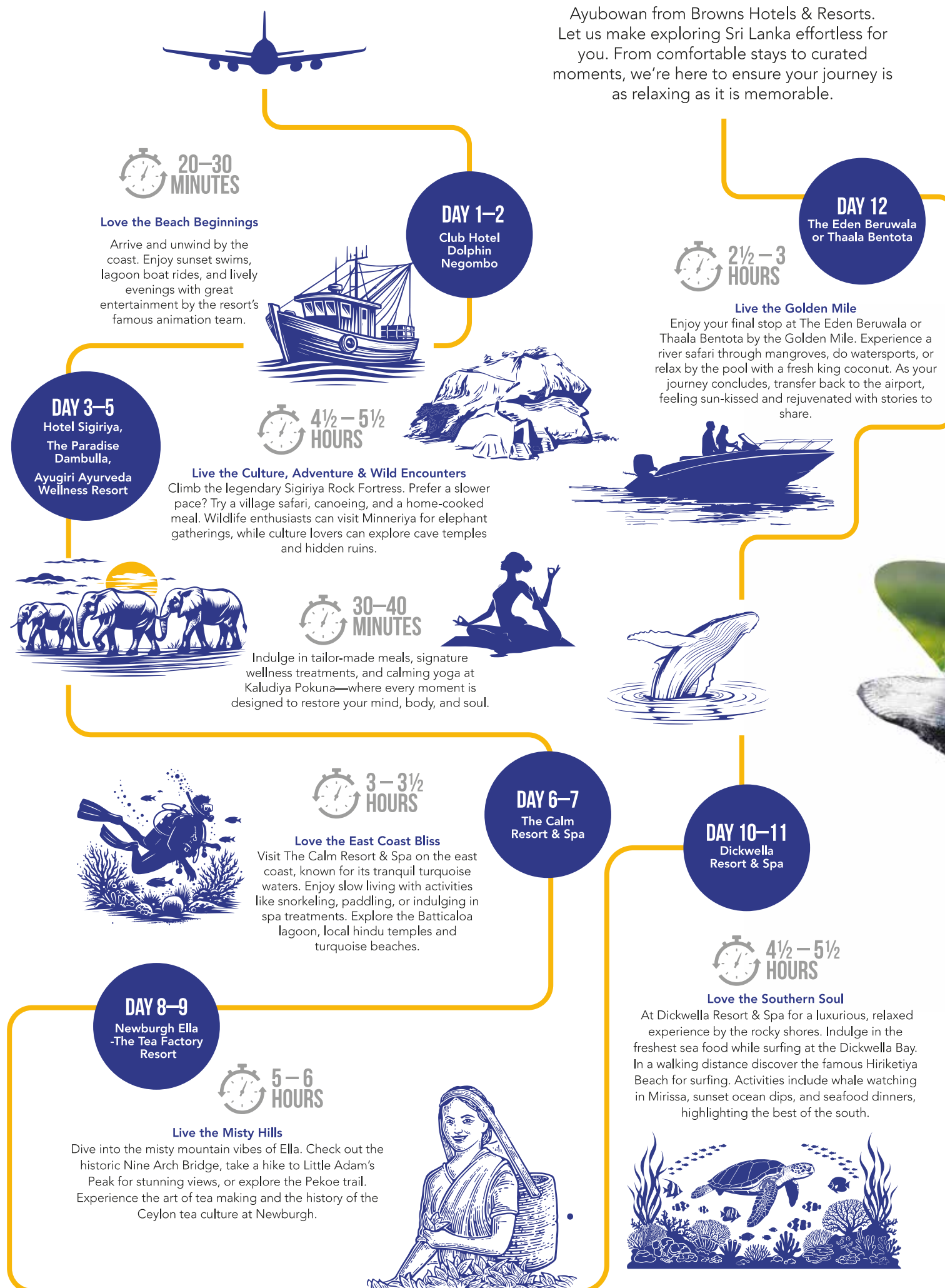
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Jetwing Vil Uyana Named Among the World's Top 10 Responsible Hotels by Wanderlust UK – The Only Sri Lankan Hotel on the Prestigious 2026 List

Jetwing Vil Uyana, A Luxury Reserve, has been recognised once again by Wanderlust magazine as one of the world's top 10 hotels for responsible travel, emerging as the only hotel from Sri Lanka to feature on the publication's prestigious 'Wandersleeps 2026' list. The accolade was selected from more than 100 editor-curated nominations and voted for by over 28,000 readers worldwide, celebrating hotels that lead the way in sustainable, experience-driven travel.



luxury tourism.”

Opened in 2006, Jetwing Vil Uyana transformed a previously degraded agricultural landscape into a purpose-built wetland sanctuary inspired by Sri Lanka's ancient cascade irrigation systems. Designed by environmental architect

Sunela Jayawardena in consultation with environmental and irrigation experts, the 28-acre eco luxury retreat features 36 dwellings set amidst lakes, paddy fields, marsh, and forest habitats, supporting significant biodiversity regeneration.

Sustainability remains central to the resort's operations, including solar energy generation, on site wastewater treatment, waste segregation, and the early elimination of single-use plastic water bottles. Jetwing Vil Uyana is also renowned for responsible wildlife experiences, including guided nocturnal walks to observe the grey slender loris, with proceeds supporting conservation and community initiatives.

Beyond environmental stewardship, Jetwing Vil Uyana contributes actively to social development through the Jetwing Youth Development Programme (JYDP), launched in

the same year as the hotel. The initiative provides free hospitality and life skills training to young people across Sri Lanka and has, to date, trained over 1,200 youth, many of whom have gone on to build long term careers within Jetwing Hotels.

As the sole Sri Lankan hotel recognised on Wanderlust's 2026 list, Jetwing Vil Uyana continues to stand as a powerful example of how world class hospitality can be driven by sustainability, regeneration, and a deep sense of place, while fostering meaningful connections with the people and landscapes around it.

With a legacy spanning over half a century in the tourism industry, Jetwing Hotels has established itself as a pioneer in curating unique experiences and offering the best of legendary Sri Lankan hospitality, with the values of passion, humility, tenacity, and the spirit of family being at its core. As a family-owned brand, Jetwing Hotels continues to be a leading advocate for sustainability and responsible tourism, with ongoing initiatives focused on community upliftment, environmental conservation, and resource efficiency. With over 35 properties across the island, the brand's diverse portfolio includes a range of Luxury Reserves, Premium Hotels, Select Hotels, and Essentials, each offering a unique perspective on Sri Lanka's rich cultural heritage and natural beauty.

The recognition comes as Jetwing Vil Uyana marks its 20th anniversary in 2026, a milestone underscoring two decades of pioneering hospitality rooted in ecological restoration, sustainability, and community engagement. The honour from Wanderlust, the UK's leading independent travel magazine, reinforces the resort's standing as a benchmark for purposeful and responsible travel on the global stage.

Commenting on the achievement, Hashan Cooray, Director of Marketing and Development at Jetwing Hotels, said, "Being named among the world's top 10 responsible hotels and as the only Sri Lankan property to receive this recognition is a proud moment for all of us. As Jetwing Vil Uyana celebrates 20 years, this endorsement reaffirms our long standing commitment to meaningful sustainability and to showcasing Sri Lanka's ability to lead on the global stage in responsible

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SriLankan Airlines Leads with Two Category Wins in South Asia at PAX Awards

SriLankan Airlines led with two wins in the Airline Award category for South Asia, securing both Best Overall Passenger Experience and Most Improved Airline at the PAX International Readership Awards 2026 held recently in Hamburg, Germany. The awards celebrate the industry's best and brightest, with winners determined by votes from PAX's global readership.

The Best Overall Passenger Experience – South Asia award recognises an airline that delivers an exceptional onboard experience to passengers across multiple service areas, including meal service, inflight entertainment and seating. At SriLankan Airlines, this entails meticulous planning at every stage of the passenger journey, supported by collaboration among multiple teams and continuous monitoring and refinement.

Maria Sathasivam, Manager Product Development of SriLankan Airlines, commented on the achievement, stating, "we are incredibly honoured to receive yet another independent endorsement of the service we deliver. Every interaction matters to us, and we are committed to

consistently meeting and exceeding passenger expectations, and it is truly rewarding to see these efforts recognised."

SriLankan Airlines continues to enhance the end-to-end travel experience, from booking through to arrival. Ongoing digital upgrades, including improvements to the airline's website and app, are designed to deliver a more intuitive and seamless customer experience, supported by AI-driven features and expanded ancillary offerings. At its hub, the Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo, the airline has also expanded self-check-in and bag drop facilities for added convenience.

Onboard, passengers are welcomed with the signature warmth and hospitality of Sri Lanka, brought to life by the airline's cabin crew. Complementing this is SriLankan's acclaimed inflight dining, which combines international flavours with regionally inspired cuisine including a signature Sri Lankan meal option that showcases the



island's rich culinary heritage.

The experience is further enhanced by SriLankan Airlines' diverse inflight entertainment offering. Available on seatback screens and wireless screening on select aircraft, passengers can access a wide range of on-demand content, from Hollywood blockbusters to regional favourites, along with an extensive selection of music.

SriLankan Airlines connects passengers to 120 destinations across 61 countries, including codeshare partnerships. Its direct services span cities across Europe, Australia, the Middle East, the Indian Subcontinent, Southeast Asia and the Far East. The airline operates an all-Airbus fleet, comprising state-of-the-art A330-200/300 and A320/321 aircraft fleet. For more information and to make bookings, visit www.srilankan.com or follow us on social media.

Aitken Spence Travels Leads in Regenerative Tourism, Category Winner and Among Sri Lanka's Top 40 at Best Management Practices Company Awards 2026

Aitken Spence Travels has once again reaffirmed its leadership in Sri Lanka's tourism sector, being recognised as a Category Winner in the Hospitality & Tourism Services sector at the CPM (Chartered Professional Management) Best Management Practices Company Awards 2026 for the third successive year. Achieving a significant milestone, the company was also listed among Sri Lanka's Top 40 companies for the first time, underscoring its continued commitment to excellence and innovation.

As Sri Lanka's leading destination management company, Aitken Spence Travels has consistently demonstrated best in class management practices, earning recognition at the CPM awards, which celebrate organisations that uphold high standards of corporate performance, governance, and sustainability.

This year's recognition reflects the company's strategic focus on regenerative tourism, an approach that goes beyond sustainability to actively restore and enhance the environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic landscapes in which it operates. By designing travel experiences that create meaningful value for local communities while preserving natural ecosystems, Aitken Spence Travels continues to redefine the role of tourism in a rapidly

evolving global context.

Aitken Spence Travels Managing Director Nalin Jayasundera stated, "At ASTL, sustainability is not a standalone initiative, it is central to our strategic direction and governance framework." This commitment is driven by the continued leadership and dedication of both the Managing Director and the Aitken Spence Group, with the company's sustainability initiatives closely aligned with Group level policies that ensure strong governance, accountability, and oversight. Notably, Aitken Spence Travels stands as the only destination management company in Sri Lanka to be certified by Travelife and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), in addition to holding ISO certifications, further reinforcing its leadership in responsible and regenerative tourism.

Commenting on this achievement, Chairperson/Chairman of Aitken Spence PLC, Stasshani Jayawardena added "Aitken Spence Travels reflects the broader Aitken Spence Group ethos, where sustainability is



embedded into governance and strategic direction rather than as stand-alone projects. This has been an integral part of how our businesses operate, ensuring accountability, consistency, and responsible growth across all our sectors, including travel and tourism."

Through initiatives centred on community empowerment, environmental stewardship, and responsible travel, the company has committed to establishing sustainability practices in the core of its operations. This forward-thinking approach not only strengthens Sri Lanka's tourism offering but also aligns with global shifts towards more conscious and impactful travel.

The dual recognition as both a Category Winner and a Top 40 company reflects Aitken Spence Travels' unwavering commitment to operational excellence, innovation, and long-term value creation. Whilst the industry continues to evolve, the company remains at the forefront, shaping a future where tourism contributes positively to both communities and the environment.

Direct Flights Link Ahmedabad and Colombo as Sri Lanka Opens New Gateway for Indian Travellers

A landmark partnership between City of Dreams Sri Lanka, Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts, Walkers Tours and Sri Lanka's privately owned international carrier FitsAir has brought scheduled direct flights between Ahmedabad and Colombo into operation, opening a seamless new travel corridor for visitors from Gujarat.

FitsAir will operate the route three times weekly, offering Gujarat-based travellers straightforward access to one of South Asia's most anticipated leisure destinations. Gujarat has emerged as one of Sri Lanka's most promising Indian source markets, driven by deep cultural connections, a well-connected travel trade, and a rapidly growing appetite for international leisure travel. The new service is designed to capitalise on that momentum, positioning Colombo as an accessible and compelling luxury getaway for the region's outbound travellers.

At the centre of the experience is City of Dreams Sri Lanka, the country's first fully integrated resort, situated in the heart of Colombo. Guests arriving on the new service

can choose from a portfolio of Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts properties across the city — from the flagship Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams to Cinnamon Grand, Cinnamon Lakeside and Cinnamon Red — spanning luxury, upscale and contemporary categories to suit a range of preferences.

The partnership also introduces tailor-made holiday packages for Indian travellers, weaving together the City of Dreams Sri Lanka experience with wider island itineraries that take in cultural highlights in Kandy and beachside escapes at Cinnamon's coastal resorts. Introductory packages are priced from INR 55,555 per person, covering return airfare, two nights' accommodation with breakfast at Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams, and private airport transfers.

Kamal Munasinghe, Senior Vice President, Colombo Hotels, Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts and General Manager,



Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams, noted that Gujarat has consistently demonstrated strong interest in Colombo as a leisure destination. He described the new flights as a natural next step — a direct gateway that connects travellers from the region to the energy, entertainment and hospitality that define City of Dreams Sri Lanka, alongside Cinnamon's broader island experiences.

FitsAir Director Ammar Kassim highlighted the strategic value of the Ahmedabad connection, noting that the airline's overnight departure from Colombo delivers travellers into Ahmedabad in the early morning — giving them a full day from arrival — while also unlocking smooth onward connections through Colombo to FitsAir's expanding international network.

Bookings for the Ahmedabad-Colombo service and associated Cinnamon travel packages are now open.



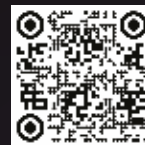
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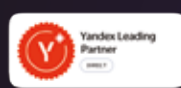
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Colombo's Only Beach Resort Experience: Pegasus Reef Hotel

Located along the golden shores of Wattala, just minutes away from Colombo city, Pegasus Reef Hotel continues to redefine beachfront hospitality in Sri Lanka. Surrounded by the beauty of the Indian Ocean and lush tropical greenery, the hotel offers guests a perfect balance between relaxation, entertainment, and modern comfort.



Recognized as Colombo's only true beachfront resort-style escape, Pegasus Reef Hotel stands out as one of the closest coastal resort experiences to the city, making it a rare destination where the ocean meets urban convenience. It has become a preferred choice for local and international travelers, families, weddings, corporate events, and weekend getaways. The hotel combines scenic coastal charm with warm Sri Lankan hospitality, creating unforgettable experiences for every guest.

As part of its newest guest experiences, Pegasus Reef Hotel recently introduced a brand-new Kids Play Area specially designed for children and families. The colorful and engaging

space allows kids to enjoy fun activities in a safe environment while parents relax and enjoy the hotel's many leisure facilities. This addition further strengthens the hotel's reputation as a family-friendly destination near Colombo.

Adding to its vibrant lifestyle offerings, the hotel has also launched its newest beachfront venue, Salt Theory Beach Bar.

Designed around the unique concept of #ColomboOnMute, Salt Theory creates the perfect escape from the busy city lifestyle. Guests can unwind by the beach, enjoy refreshing Tropical Beverages, relaxing music, and experience one of the best sunset spots around Colombo. With its chilled atmosphere and stunning oceanfront setting, Salt Theory has quickly become a favorite hangout destination for sunset lovers and nightlife enthusiasts.

For seafood lovers, The Fishery Restaurant offers an exceptional dining experience focused on fresh and flavorful seafood cuisine. Known for its delicious dishes, signature

seafood platters, and relaxing atmosphere, The Fishery has become one of the hotel's iconic dining venues. Guests can enjoy freshly prepared seafood specialties while overlooking the calming coastal surroundings.

Meanwhile, Sand & Spice Restaurant delivers a refined à la carte dining experience featuring a selection of local and international favorites. With elegant ambiance, carefully crafted menus, and quality service, the restaurant offers the perfect setting for casual dining, business lunches, and intimate dinners.

Beyond its dining and leisure experiences, Pegasus Reef Hotel continues to offer spacious rooms, banquet halls, conference facilities, beach access, swimming pools, tennis courts, and event spaces suitable for every occasion. Whether it's a relaxing holiday, family outing, romantic evening, or corporate gathering, the hotel provides an experience that combines comfort, luxury, and the calming beauty of the sea.

With exciting new concepts, family-friendly experiences, and exceptional hospitality, Pegasus Reef Hotel continues to stand as one of Sri Lanka's most loved beachfront destinations near Colombo.

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Kandy Myst by Cinnamon Hosts Exclusive Meet-and-Greet with Rugby Legend Kieran Read

An exclusive meet & greet with Kieran Read, former captain of the New Zealand All Blacks, was recently held at Kandy Myst by Cinnamon, bringing together a distinguished gathering from Sri Lanka's rugby fraternity.

Organised by the hotel, the engaging session provided guests with a unique opportunity to interact with the rugby great, gain insights into his leadership philosophy and approach to the game, and hear reflections from his celebrated career. The forum fostered open exchange, creating a platform for meaningful dialogue and inspiration among those present.

The event saw participation from Sri Lankan rugby legends, alongside distinguished guests including the High Commissioner of New Zealand to Sri Lanka and the Mayor of Kandy, further highlighting the significance of the occasion.

The interaction concluded on a warm and engaging note, leaving attendees with valuable insights, shared inspiration, and a renewed sense of connection within the rugby community.



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26Km

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4.6Km

Coconut
Tree Hill
15Km



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The Road Less Travelled: Cycling Sri Lanka with Wayfarers

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At Wayfarers, we have been operating cycling journeys in Sri Lanka since 2010. Over the years, we have built up a fleet of over 50, well maintained, 27 speed hybrid touring bicycles of German origin, along with 8, high



quality European standard e-bikes for those looking for a little extra assistance. More importantly, we have a crew that understands how to run cycling journeys in Sri Lanka, from pacing and safety to hydration, support vehicles and maintenance, and the small details that make a big difference on the road.

From an industry point of view, cycling is something more operators are looking to include, but it is not always easy to execute well on the ground. That is where we come in. We have the fleet, the crew, and the operational know how to support partners who want to incorporate cycling into their Sri Lanka programs without having to build it from scratch.

At the end of the day, cycling here is not about rushing from A to B. It's about slowing things down and seeing

Sri Lanka properly. And when done right, it's one of the best ways to experience the island.



Anantara Resorts in Sri Lanka Recognised Among the World's Best Hotels in Travel + Leisure's 2026 Top 500 List

Anantara Hotels & Resorts in Sri Lanka celebrates a remarkable international recognition as Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort and Anantara Kalutara Resort have been named among the world's best hotels in Travel + Leisure's 2026 T+L 500. The two properties are the only Sri Lankan resorts to be recognised in this year's prestigious list, underscoring Anantara's contribution to the continued development of Sri Lanka as a world-class luxury travel destination

The T+L 500 is one of the most respected hotel accolades in international travel, compiled from the results of Travel + Leisure's annual World's Best Awards survey. Presented as a curated guide to the world's leading hotels and resorts, the list celebrates properties that continue to inspire travellers through exceptional service, memorable experiences, distinctive design, and a strong sense of place.

This recognition is more than an award. It is a tribute to the people who bring each resort to life every day from chefs, butlers and spa therapists to gardeners, housekeepers, guides, front office and service teams whose warmth, care and attention to detail shape every guest journey.

A Journey into Southern Sri Lanka's Coastal Soul: Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort

On Sri Lanka's southern coast, Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort offers a different expression of island luxury. Set on a rocky outcrop overlooking the Indian Ocean and surrounded by coconut palms and golden beaches, the resort is a secluded clifftop retreat designed for travellers seeking privacy, restoration and meaningful connection.

The resort invites guests to slow down and reconnect with nature,



wellness, cuisine and culture. Its experiences range from Ayurvedic-inspired spa journeys and yoga to destination dining, surf adventures, local excursions and immersive encounters with Sri Lanka's southern heritage. Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort is especially celebrated for its sense of seclusion.

"To be recognised among the world's best hotels in Travel & Leisure is a wonderful honour for Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort and a tribute to the dedication of our team," said Mr. Frederik Van Den Borre, The General Manager. "Anantara Tangalle is defined by its peaceful coastal setting, restorative experiences and deep connection to the south of Sri Lanka. But above all, it is our people who create the sense of belonging, care and discovery that guests remember long after they leave."

A Living Tribute to Sri Lankan Architecture: Anantara Kalutara Resort

Set between the Indian Ocean and the tranquil Kalu River lagoon, Anantara Kalutara Resort offers a rare luxury coastal escape shaped by one of Sri Lanka's greatest creative minds. The resort is located on the final project site of legendary architect Geoffrey Bawa, the father of Tropical Modernism, whose design vision continues to define the resort's atmosphere of openness, light, water and harmony with nature.

The resort's architecture reflects Bawa's signature approach, with sunlit spaces, natural textures and



a seamless relationship between indoors and outdoors. This gives Anantara Kalutara Resort a distinctive identity unlike any other beach resort in Sri Lanka, creating a strong sense of place where design, landscape and hospitality come together as one.

"This recognition is an incredibly proud moment for Anantara

Kalutara Resort and for every team member who brings our guest experience to life each day," said Mr. Christoph Dueker, General Manager of Anantara Kalutara Resort. "Our resort carries a unique architectural and cultural story, shaped by Geoffrey Bawa's timeless design philosophy and its connection to Sri Lanka's natural landscape. What makes that story truly meaningful is the warmth of our people, their care, creativity and genuine Sri Lankan hospitality, which turn every stay into a memorable journey."

A Recognition for Sri Lanka's People and Destination Appeal

The inclusion of both Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort and Anantara Kalutara Resort in the 2026 T+L 500 is a significant endorsement of Sri Lanka's growing position as a world-class travel destination. It highlights the island's ability to offer far more than beautiful beaches from architecture and Ayurveda to cuisine, wildlife, culture, adventure and the genuine warmth of its people.

As global travellers continue to seek destinations with authenticity, wellness, nature, culture and human connection, Sri Lanka is uniquely positioned to stand out. The recognition of two Anantara resorts in the 2026 T+L 500 reinforces the island's strength as a destination that combines world-class hospitality with deeply rooted local experiences.

The Timeless Story of Spice

Experiencing Sri Lanka's Heritage, Nature, and Flavours at Spice Ceylon



Conceptualized by Thema Collection, Spice Ceylon brings to life the timeless story of Sri Lanka's spice heritage. For generations, the aroma of Ceylon Cinnamon, pepper, cloves, and cardamom has shaped the island's culture, kitchens, and way of life. At Spice Ceylon, this legacy unfolds through an authentic journey that connects visitors with Sri Lanka's spice traditions, rich heritage, and local communities.

An Immersive Spice Walk

The experience begins in the spice grove, where guests are guided by knowledgeable interpreters with agricultural backgrounds, offering deeper insight into traditional cultivation practices passed down through generations. Beyond spices, the walk reveals the surrounding biodiversity, including birds and butterflies, while sharing stories and local knowledge connected to the landscape.



Preserving Stories Through the Spice Heritage Museum



The journey continues at the Spice Heritage Museum, where a curated collection of artifacts, tools, and interactive displays traces Sri Lanka's deep-rooted connection to spice. From ancient trade routes to Ayurveda and culinary traditions, the museum preserves narratives that remain an integral part of everyday Sri Lankan life.

Rooted in Sustainability

Spice Ceylon is deeply rooted in sustainability, working closely with nearby farmers and local communities to support traditional farming practices while preserving the authenticity and richness of Sri Lanka's spices.



Authentic Flavours of Sri Lanka

Guests can savor an authentic Sri Lankan culinary experience inspired by the royal kitchens of the Kandyan Kingdom, featuring richly spiced traditional curries prepared with fresh, locally sourced ingredients, offering a memorable taste of the island's true culinary heritage.



Take a Piece of Sri Lanka Home

The journey concludes at the Spice Boutique, where visitors can explore and purchase carefully curated spices, Ayurvedic products, herbal remedies, and natural wellness items inspired by centuries-old traditions. More than a destination, Spice Ceylon is a celebration of Sri Lanka's natural and cultural heritage, where every spice carries a story, every experience reflects tradition, and every visit creates a meaningful connection to the island.





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Sri Lanka Set To Launch The First Dedicated Sustainable Tourism Association In South Asia

Sri Lanka embarks on a journey towards more sustainable and prosperous tourism industry!

The Executive Committee of the Sustainable Tourism Association of Sri Lanka (SusTour) announced its final meeting scheduled for May 6, where preparations to be finalized for the official launch of the first ever private sector led, non-governmental Sustainable Tourism Association in South Asia. Most tourism associations in Asia operates as dedicated Eco Tourism entities while this is probably the first in Asia.

This momentous event will be officiated by Prof. Ruwan Ranasinghe, the Deputy Minister of Tourism, who has graciously agreed to inaugurate the Association in conjunction with a media launch.

Prof. Ranasinghe is not only a qualified academic specializing in sustainable tourism but also a passionate advocate for the development of sustainable tourism practices in Sri Lanka. His involvement is pivotal, as he has expressed his commitment to provide unwavering support to the Sustainable Tourism Association of Sri Lanka.

In addition to Prof. Ranasinghe's support, Buddhika Hewawasam, Chairman of the SLTDA and Dheera Hettiarachchi, Chairman of the Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Management, have also pledged their cooperation in the implementation of sustainable tourism initiatives through their respective state organisations. Their combined expertise and resources are expected to play a crucial role in shaping the future of tourism in Sri Lanka, ensuring that it aligns with sustainable development goals.

This inauguration marks a significant step toward fostering a sustainable tourism framework in Sri Lanka, one that prioritizes environmental preservation, cultural heritage, and economic viability. The Sustainable

Tourism Association of Sri Lanka is poised to lead the charge in promoting responsible tourism practices, ensuring that the industry flourishes while respecting the rich natural and cultural resources of the island.

Speaking at an exclusive press interview Tourism Deputy Minister noted "I am thrilled to see the private sector actively participating in the promotion of sustainable development, particularly within the tourism industry. This partnership is not just beneficial but essential, as it represents a viable mission that requires the joint engagement of both government and private entities. By working together, we can ensure that our tourism practices not only enhance economic growth but also preserve our natural resources and cultural heritage for future generations. It is through this collaborative approach that we can create lasting change and fulfill our commitment to sustainability."

Adding to this collaborative effort, Australian High Commissioner Matthew Duckworth said Australia would continue its long-term support for sustainable tourism development in Sri Lanka. Australia has contributed more than 50 million Australian dollars over the past decade to sustainable tourism initiatives in Sri Lanka, including to support more sustainable planning, accreditation, and skills development for this crucial sector. The High Commissioner confirmed that this support would continue into the future, and highlighted Australia's partnership with Market Development Facility (MDF), which had recently launched a new initiative using data analytics to help Sri Lankan policy makers better understand how travelers discover and engage with destinations.

"Our vision is to create a platform where all stakeholders including product manufacturers can collaborate and



share best practices in sustainable tourism" said Chandra Wickramasinghe, elect founder President of the Association. "We aim to ensure that tourism in Sri Lanka not only provides economic benefits but also contributes positively to the environment and local communities" he said.

The founders of STASL-SusTour believe that sustainable tourism is the 'Future of World Tourism' and is crucial for the long-term viability of Sri Lanka's tourism sector, which is a significant contributor to the nation's economy. By fostering responsible travel practices, the association seeks to educate stakeholders, including tourists, and businesses along with manufacturers about the importance of sustainability.

The association plans to launch various initiatives, including workshops, awareness campaigns, and partnerships with local and international organizations focused on sustainable tourism said Nalin Malwenna newly elect Secretary. Through these efforts, SusTour hopes to position Sri Lanka as a leading destination for eco-conscious travelers looking for authentic and responsible travel experiences.

"The establishment of the Sustainable Tourism Association of Sri Lanka arrives at a pivotal moment, signaling a commitment to a more sustainable future in the nation's tourism landscape" said the elect Treasurer Dr. Samantha Pathirathne.

The launch of the association marks a pivotal step for Sri Lanka as it seeks to position itself as a leader in sustainable travel, ensuring that its breathtaking landscapes and rich heritage are preserved for future generations while simultaneously boosting the local economy. The collaboration with Australian experts reflects a shared vision for a sustainable future in tourism that is both innovative and responsible

Hilton Yala Featured by Condé Nast Traveller Among the 'Best Spa Hotels in Sri Lanka'

Hilton Yala Resort has been recognised by Condé Nast Traveller India as one of "The Best Spa Hotels in Sri Lanka for a Wellness Break," further cementing its position as a leading destination for immersive luxury and holistic wellbeing experiences.

The feature highlights a curated selection of the island's most exceptional wellness retreats, placing Hilton Yala among the country's most sought-after spa destinations—an acknowledgment of the resort's distinctive ability to blend luxury hospitality with nature-led rejuvenation.

Located within the buffer zone of Yala National Park and overlooking the Indian Ocean, Hilton Yala offers a wellness experience deeply rooted in its surroundings. The resort's spa and wellbeing offerings are designed to draw inspiration from the rhythms of nature, combining restorative therapies with the calming influence of the wilderness.

Guests are invited to unwind through a range of curated experiences—from tranquil spa treatments and holistic wellness rituals to serene moments immersed in the sights and sounds of the surrounding landscape. The resort's design and setting further enhance this connection, creating an environment where relaxation and nature exist in harmony. Complementing the wellness journey are refined culinary experiences and spacious accommodations, often highlighted by guests for their comfort,

design, and sense of serenity .

"We are truly honoured to be recognised by Condé Nast Traveller India among the best spa hotels in Sri Lanka," said Gitanjali Chakravarthy, General Manager of Hilton Yala Resort. "This recognition reflects our commitment to creating holistic guest experiences that go beyond traditional luxury—where wellness is inspired by nature, and every stay offers an opportunity to reconnect, recharge, and rediscover a sense of balance."

As Hilton's only wildlife resort globally, Hilton Yala continues to redefine destination-led luxury by offering experiences that seamlessly integrate wellness, wildlife, and sustainability. Guided by Hilton's Travel with Purpose strategy, the resort remains committed to responsible tourism, environmental stewardship, and creating meaningful connections between guests and the natural world.

This latest recognition further strengthens Hilton Yala's growing international presence, positioning the resort as not only a gateway to Sri Lanka's wildlife, but also as a destination for transformative wellness experiences in the wild.

Hilton Yala Resort is part of Hilton Honors®, the



award-winning guest loyalty program for Hilton's 24 world-class brands. Hilton Honors members who book directly through preferred Hilton channels have access to instant benefits, including a flexible payment slider that allows members to choose nearly any combination of Points and money to book a stay, an exclusive member discount that can't be found anywhere else and free standard Wi-Fi. Members also have access to contactless technology exclusively through the industry-leading Hilton Honors mobile app, where Hilton Honors members can check-in, choose their room and access their room using Digital Key.

Hilton Yala Resort is a luxurious 5-star full-service resort located on the southern edge of Sri Lanka, adjacent to the iconic Yala National Park and overlooking the Indian Ocean. With 42 stylish guest accommodations—including rooms, suites and private pool-villas—the resort marries sophisticated design with the immersive wilderness of the surrounding landscape.

Managed by Hilton Hotels & Resorts and owned by Wild Beach Resorts (Pvt) Ltd, Hilton Yala offers three dining venues, a spa, a fitness centre and a programme of curated experiences including guided safaris, bush walks and coastal excursions.

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Thema

COLLECTION



Tea & Experience - Mandaram Nuwara

Discover Sri Lanka through 16 unique escapes from sun-kissed beaches to mist-covered mountains. Each property is a tribute to the island's beauty, thoughtfully designed to make you fall in love with its charm.

Conceptualized by our founder, Chandra Wickramasinghe, and the Thema team, every destination reflects a distinctive theme inspired by the culture, nature, and history of its region.

At Thema Collection, sustainability is at the heart of everything we do. We focus on environmental stewardship, local employment, community empowerment, and the preservation of culture and heritage ensuring our initiatives enrich both our surroundings and guest experiences.

Moving beyond the traditional hotel chain model, we offer a collection of thematic, experiential properties - each telling its own story and creating unforgettable journeys for every traveler.



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Sigiriya



Wild Glamping
Galoya



Amba Yaalu
Kandalama



Maalu Maalu Resort & Spa
Pasikuda



Waraka
Udawalawe



Mountbatten
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Scottish Planter
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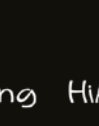
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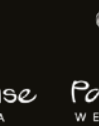
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Hikka House
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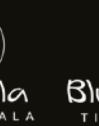
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