

CHECK IN



A
CEYLON PRESS
TINY GUIDE TO SRI LANKA'S
BEST HOTELS

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In a
Word
or Two

Of Sri Lanka's 10,000+ places listed as offering accommodation, the greater majority are privately let villas and apartments, supplemented by homestays. Less than a quarter of its accommodation is classified as a hotel – 2,500 in all. A third of these hotels are 4-star and less than 8% (200) are rated as 5-star.

For a small island still greatly overlooked by international visitors who are more accustomed to visit Thailand, the Maldives or India, this may seem more than sufficient – but most of the 200 5-star hotels are small private operations that focus on providing authentic boutique experiences rather than long corridors of identical bedrooms.

The hotel chains that dominate the rest of the world – Taj, Sheraton, Marriot, Starwood, Meridian, etc. – have yet to put in much of an appearance in Sri Lanka.

Even so, as tourism roves forward on its somewhat uneven upward trajectory across the island, local chains – such as Jetwing, Cinnamon, Resplendent, Tangerine, Teardrop, Taru and Uga - are developing a growing reputation for exceptional hospitality that can be evenly experienced in any of their branded hotels.

Most hotel development has, of course, followed the tourists and so hugs the coastline from Negombo, near the airport, to Yala in the far south, with the greater number coalescing around Galle. A much more modest sprinkling of other 5-star hotel dusts such locations as Kandy and the cultural triangle, with a few outstanding examples reaching out into the north and east.

Although it is invidiously partial to pick out the best, this Tiny Guide lists the most likely contenders for happy stays.

Colombo

THE COLOMBO COURT HOTEL & SPA



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE COLOMBO COURT HOTEL & SPA.

Affordable, and very environmentally-minded, this much overlooked boutique hotel is within walking distance of many of Colombo's nicest haunts. Sitting just off the traffic jam that is Duplication Road, it is a habitat of rare calm and tranquillity, its lush pool and rooftop bar among its many subtle delights.

THE CINNAMON GRAND



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE CINNAMON GRAND.

The flagship hotel in a chain of Cinnamon Hotels, the Grand is a stone's throw from the President's Office. Despite its corporate, blocky architecture, its secret weapon is its people. It makes a point of knowing who you actually are and what you really want. From lavish pools to flaky croissants, themed restaurants to battleship-large reception desks, it offers all you would hope for from a large, successful hotel.

THE GALLE FACE HOTEL



IMAGE: PUBLIC DOMAIN.

With a Victorian era guest list that reads like Who's Who of the time, this iconic hotel is the only one in Colombo that still enjoys direct sea access - though to bathe off its slim rocky beach to invite prescient thoughts of mortality.

It started life as a modest Dutch Guesthouse before the opening of the Suez Canal turned the trickle of eastward bound Europeans into a river.

Continually enlarged and upgraded, most notably by Thomas Skinner in 1894, it became the city's top luxury meeting point attracting an international A List. Gandhi, Noel Coward, Che Guevara, Yuri Gagarin, Nixon, Prince Philip, and Elizabeth Taylor all booked rooms. Vivien Leigh sulked in her bedroom, sent home in disgrace by her husband Laurence Olivier.

Little has changed since her repeated calls to room service: it is just as lovely, weathering a recent upgrade with rare good taste. It is the best place to Wedding Watch as it hosts around one thousand society weddings a year.

Enjoy them as you nibble Battenburg cakes on the terrace, sip Pimm's and watch the Crow Man scare away the birds.

THE GRAND ORIENTAL HOTEL



AN ILLUSTRATION BY UNBEKANNT FROM THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY
OF THE GRAND ORIENTAL HOTEL IN COLOMBO. PUBLIC DOMAIN.

Home to Dutch governors and British squaddies, The Grand Oriental Hotel was turned into a luxury billet back in 1875; and fights on still. Its bar offers one of the best views of Colombo Harbour.

THE HILTON



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE HILTON.

Weathering a troubled birth, the Colombo Hilton was nevertheless one of the first globally branded hotels to wash up on Colombo's then more parochial shores. It was finally launched in 1987, a year which, but for this, the country would chose not to dwell upon. Civil war raged, Jaffna was besieged and a serious of

murderous race riots broke out.

But to honour the hotel's thirty years of indefatigably providing guests with all the best services of a major hotel (and one of the best brunches on offer in the city), a stamp and a first day cover were issued by the Sri Lanka Post in 2017.

JETWING SEVEN



IMAGE COURTESY OF JETWING

Jetwing is the island's leading independent hotel chain with over thirty hotels and villas operating to standards and dining most other international hotel chains might be smart to pay attention to. Jetwing hotels promote strong environmental values; and their Colombo hotel offers one of the best sunset views in the city, its abundant bar enfolding a pool and languid seats from which to enjoy the urban panorama.

THE KINGSBURY



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE KINGSBURY HOTEL.

A splendidly straightforward 5-star hotel situated at the top end of Galle Face Green with views onto the Old Parliament, the sea, and the docks. Yue Chuan, one of its several restaurants, serves up some of the best Chinese food in Colombo.

THE MOUNT LAVINIA HOTEL



AN ILLUSTRATION OF A PHOTOGRAPH BY ALFRED WILLIAM AMANDUS PLATE OF THE MOUNT LAVINIA HOTEL AND BATHING PAVILION FROM 1890-1910. PUBLIC DOMAIN.

Built in 1806 by the British Governor, Sir Thomas Maitland, Mount Lavinia gained immediate fame for its not-so-secret tunnel linking the governor's wine cellar to the home of his burgher lover. Successive governors would go on to use it as their out-of-town seaside retreat, enjoying its smart siting on a rock

overlooking the sea and two pleasant beaches, restyling it in 1830 as an Italianate palace. With two hundred and seventy five rooms, it has been operating as a hotel since 1947, much loved as a wedding venue and brunching spot.

MANIUMPATHY



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE MANIUMPATHY HOTEL

By checking in at the beautifully restored walawwa that is Maniumpathy, you can pretend that you are anywhere but in a big city. Cool, quiet, and calm, the little hotel, despite having changed hands multiple times, is a great option for anyone wishing to replace big brand hotels with something on a much more human a scale.

NUMBER 11



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE GEOFFRAY BAWA TRUST.

Hidden down the 33rd Lane that turns off Colombo's Bagatelle Road is Geoffray Bawa's private town house, a rambling architectural marvel and museum which, whilst not run as a regular hotel, lets out two rooms to visitors.

With demand far outstripping supply, getting to stay there can prove tricky - but lucky guests then have the great good fortune of having the entire museum, with its gorgeous assemblage of curios and masterpieces, all to themselves once the day trippers have gone.

SHANGRI-LA



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE SHANGRI-LA HOTEL.

One of the milestones in Colombo's journey from a overlooked and embattled post-Independence past into a more materialistically glamorous future was the creation of the high rise Shangri-La Hotel. Built by the Chinese as a sort of off-shoot of their Belt-and-Braces mission,

it overlooks the sea at Galle Face Green with half a dozen bars and restaurants, and lavish bedrooms well able to match the best in any other globally branded five star hotel.

Just a stones throw away is China's greater investment in the country – Colombo International Financial City, a 300 acre, \$15 billion, special economic zone reclaimed from the sea which, the suits claim that will be a place that “fuzes the culture and energy of a nation with best international practice.”

Whilst the exact meaning of this penetrating solipsism is hard to unpick, and the planned architecture so modernistically predictable as to make it tricky to know whether you are in Dubai, Shanghai, or London Docklands, Pricewaterhouse Cooper insists it will add almost twelve billion dollars to the country's annual GDP.

TAJ SAMUDRA



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE TAJ SAMUDRA HOTEL.

One of the oldest luxury hotels in Colombo, the Taj was constructed before astonishing premiums was put on the capital's sea facing land. It therefore enjoys a rare calming green skirt of lush gardens and wings that go out rather than up. Scion of the Taj India chain, it offers its guests everything they might

hope for from a massive corporate hotel, including excellent restaurants (especially YUMI), a useful hair salon - and, hidden in its gardens, all that is left of the once mighty Colombo Club, established in 1871 for the purpose of establishing and maintaining reading, billiard, card, and refreshment rooms in Colombo for the benefit of the members".

TINTAGEL



IMAGE COURTESY OF TINTAGEL HOTEL

The graceful Colombo residence of the Bandaranaike families and scene of the assassination of S.W.R. Bandaranaike, Tintagel is now an impressive boutique hotel run by the Paradise Road designer and entrepreneur, Udayshanth Fernando. If sinking into unquestionable peace and luxury is your principal need, this is the place for you.

UGA RESIDENCE



IMAGE COURTESY OF UGA RESIDENCE.

The landmark hotel in a small and growing local chain, Uga Residence is a 19th century mansion that has morphed delightfully into a lavish boutique hotel. Set like a delightful navel in the heart of the city, its bar offers an inexhaustible range of whiskeys.

Central

THE FLAME TREE ESTATE & HOTEL



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE FLAME TREE ESTATE & HOTEL.

An art deco plantation manor close to Kandy, the Elephant Orphanage, Sigiriya and Dambulla, The Flame Tree Estate & Hotel has been described as “a little slice of heaven and a big dose of serenity.”

Surrounded by jungle, and its own plantations of spices, timber, coconut, and rubber, it mixes

collections of contemporary Sri Lankan art with European Modernism; and fuses classic Sri Lankan food with familiar European dishes.

Restored with the help of the celebrated Sri Lankan architect Channa Daswatte, the hotel is set beside the Galagedera Pass, where the Kandyan King Kirti Sri Rajasinha thwarted the attempt the Dutch East India army to invade the island's last independent kingdom in 1765.

The hotel is also the home of The Ceylon Press, a digital publishing initiative set up to tell the story of Sri Lanka.

HELGA'S FOLLY



IMAGE COURTESY OF HELGA'S FOLLY.

No list of Sri Lankan hotels would ever be complete without Helga Blow's famous anti-hotel. Sri Lanka's last great eccentric, Helga Blow, Dior model, and niece of the eminent architect Minette de Silva, returned to her homeland in 1988. Seeking therapeutic distractions from a tortuous divorce, she set about

decorating her home with the extraordinary murals that still adorn every spare inch of wall space.

Home became a hotel and guests can still find Madame Helga (as in the Kelly Jones Stereophonics song), walking the lush corridors of her Kandy eyrie in Philip Treacy hats, doyenne of “an eccentric collision between Faulty Towers and Absolutely Fabulous”.

THE KANDY HOUSE



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE KANDY HOUSE.

Built by the last Chief Minister to the Kandyan kings, The Kandy House is discreet, deeply peaceful luxury hotel outside Kandy. One of the first really outstanding boutique hotels on the island, it attracts such guests as Prince and Princess Michael of Kent and Princess Michael of Kent and Madhur Jaffrey, the grand dame of Indian cookery whose Sri Lankan Fish Curry remains the apogee for any ambitious pisces cisternina.

THE QUEEN'S HOTEL



IMAGE: PUBLIC DOMAIN.

The crown has slipped at this once grandest of grand hotels. Built by the last King of Kandy before being grabbed by the British Governor, The Queen's Hotel opened as one of the island's top hotels in 1869 attracting the great, the good and the wickedly wealthy. Its bar served Lord Mountbatten of Burma

and every luminary before with rounds of cocktails
and peppery gins.

From its priceless position next to the Temple of the
Tooth in Kandy, guests can watch the birds on the Sea
of Milk, as the lake opposite is called.

Now more of an elderly stolid county maiden than a
glamorous queen, it remains a decent and charming
place, especially for those in search of shade, beer,
and a rest from the relentless tide of busy Kandyans
shopping and sightseeing just beyond its doors.

THE SUISSE HOTEL



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE SUISSE HOTEL.

Originally built in the 17th century by a minister of the Kandyan king, the Suisse hotel got its name when it was sold to Madam Burdayron, an intrepid Swiss hotelier. Lord Mountbatten gave her a block booking from 1943–45 when he took over the entire hotel as

the Headquarters of the South East Asia Command. It is now run as a ninety room hotel owned by the Ceylon Hotels Corporation, standing in four acres of gardens in Kandy, and offering a service and décor that is serviceably vintage.

South

THE AMANGALLA



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE AMANGALLA, GALLE.

For 140 years Galle's most majestic hotel was known as the New Oriental Hotel before being rebaptised in 2005 as the Amangalla. Its real date stretches back to 1684 - the headquarters of the Dutch. Now a heritage hotel, with deep, humbling verandas, it has wisely chosen to restrict its number of rooms to better focus on the sort of luxury you know you deserve the moment you find it.

AMANWELLA



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE AMANWELLA, TANGALLE.

Amanwella is the sort of hotel that guests often chose to arrive at by seaplane. One of 34 Aman hotels in 20 countries, it knows about how best to please. Shy celebrities, discarded Western prime ministers – all have found their way to this uber stylish retreat of infinity pools and gourmet menus that overlook the golden beaches of Godellawela near Tangalle.

CAPE WELIGAMA



IMAGE COURTESY OF CAPE WELIGAMA, WELIGAMA.

One of Resplendent Ceylon's Relais & Châteaux hotels, Cape Weligama is made up of 39 villas and suites gathered loosely together, village style, on a headland overlooking Weligame Bay opposite Mirissa. Expect nothing less than the best.

FORT BAZAAR



IMAGE COURTESY OF FORT BAZAAR, GALLE.

A seventeenth century merchant's townhouse in downtown Galle Fort Bazaar is now home to a boutique hotel of handsome guestrooms, delicious food, and verandas from which to watch the busy world worry past.

THE FORT PRINTERS



ILLUSTRATION CREDIT: "THE FORT PRINTERS HOTEL" PHOTO
PROVIDED BY MANAGEMENT TO TRIPADVISOR.

A small eighteenth century building, Fort Printer's is now run as a boutique hotel in Galle. Its restaurant serves some of the very best food on the island, a dazzling gustation played out on Sri Lankan, Lebanese, and Pakistani themes.

THE FORTRESS RESORT & SPA



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE FORTRESS RESORT & SPA.

Situated near Galle, this seaside boutique, overlooking sandy beaches and stilt fishermen, is spacious, luxurious, and calming. It polished bedrooms, yoga and excellent menu foster such as sense of well-being as to bring even Lazarus back to life, where he to drop by unexpectedly.

THE GALLE FORT HOTEL



IMAGE COURTESY OF GALLE FORT HOTEL.

A gem merchant's grand mansion; RAF barracks; post office; bakery; lapidary; and playground for local cricketers - this small, ultra-luxurious, boutique hotel in downtown Galle saw many iterations before it settled most happily down upon its present one.

KAHANDA KANDA

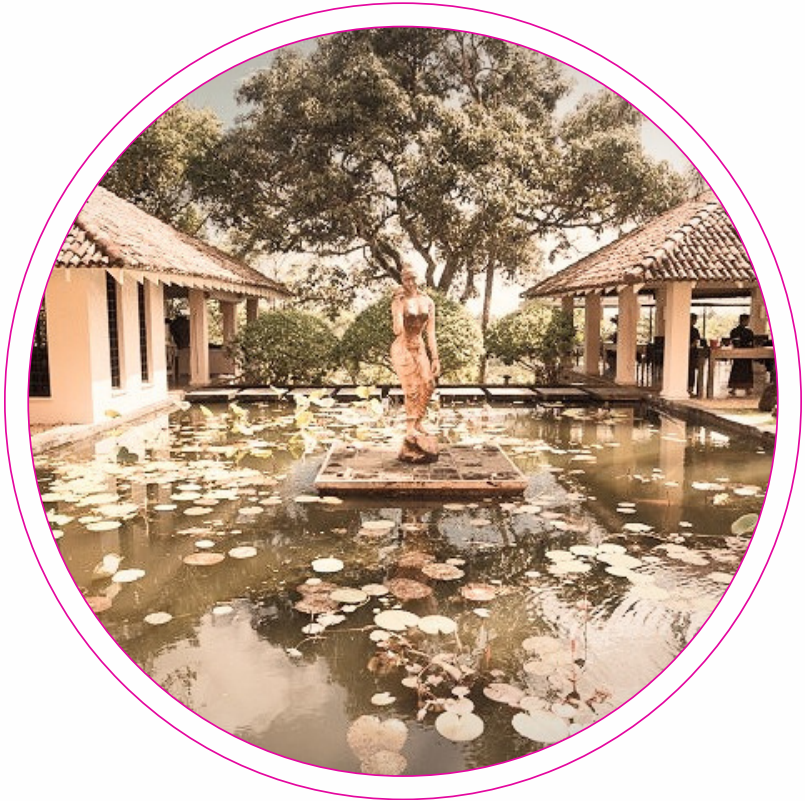


IMAGE COURTESY OF THE KAHANDA KANDA HOTEL.

Kahanda Kanda is the star hotel in a small group of South Coast boutique hotels (The KK Collection) founded by a British interior designer. It is perched on a very private hill near Koggala Lake, is an indulgence of sequestered English country style villas that have happily woken up in a more tropical wonderland than Hampshire, Harrogate, or Hartlepool.

THE LAST HOUSE



PICTURE COURTESY OF THE LAST HOUSE, TANGALLE.

Said to be the last building created by Asia's famous architect Geoffrey Bawa, the Last House overlooks a sandy beach near Tangalle, its capacious gardens enclosing a calm and beautiful building of just five bedrooms that offers every necessary luxury.

THE LONG HOUSE



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE LONG HOUSE HOTEL.

The most glamorous of a collection of Taru villas and hotels, The Long House overlooks the sea in Bentota, its artfully designed spaces and rooms, gardens and menus offering all that is needed to satisfy a seaside sojourn.

LUNUGANGA



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE LUNUGANGA

You can now do better than briefly visit Geoffry Bawa's Bentota country house estate - you can stay there too. "Each vista," wrote Michael Ondaatje, "each location feels like another elegy or another voice—the first person, then the third person, the vernacular, then the classical. You discover you wish

to be at one location at noon, another at twilight,
some when you are young, others later in life.”

The estate stretches across a peninsula, the lagoon water of Dedduwa Lake on both sides; and views of water dominating the gardens as much as the many statues do – classical and animal, urns, pots, and follies.

The house itself gazes out through the branches of a massive frangipani tree onto its sequestered landscape, the hotel side of it now managed by Teadrop Hotels, a local chain that knows all that is needed to be known about comfort.

MALABAR HILL



IMAGE COURTESY OF MALABAR HILL.

Ten very discreet villas make up this luxury retreat high on a hill surrounded by paddy fields and less than three miles from Weligama's surf crazy beach. From its menus to its infinity pool, the hotel is beautifully thought through, a gloriously successful expression of hospitality and striking architecture.

OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT HOTEL & RESTAURANT



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT
HOTEL & RESTAURANT.

Thalpe’s homage to Edward Lear provides everything you might want from a small boutique seaside hotel.

Overlooking the ocean, its pool and restaurant, bedrooms and open spaces are just the place to sit back “hand in hand, on the edge of the sand, (to dance) by the light of the moon”. Lear himself made a

brief visit to the island in 1874, travelling by train, mail coach and one-horse trap to the South, Ratnapura, Colombo and Kandy, painting his way from place to place and leaving behind 76 landscapes that beautifully capture the alluring charm of the tropics to a jaded western eye.

PEDLAR'S MANOR



IMAGE COURTESY OF PEDLAR'S MANOR.

A stylish private hotel created within an old manor; Pedlar's Manor is located in Unawatuna near Galle. It has but a handful of rooms, a heartfelt collection of vintage cars and the promise of almost-perfect peace in what has become one of the busiest and most visited sections of the Sri Lankan south.

THE SUN HOUSE



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE SUN HOUSE.

The ideal place to avoid the tourist crowds of Galle – and yet still be as close to it as any lover, The Sun House was built by a Scottish spice merchant in the 1860s. Elegantly casual, with gardens of frangipani and an enviable menu, it is the kind of hotel that truly makes itself your home.

WILD COAST TENTED LODGE



IMAGE COURTESY OF WILD COAST TENTED LODGE, YALA.

Described as “a chic safari lodge,” this cluster of cocoon-like seed pod villa-ettes lies adjacent to the famous Yala National Park. Whilst offering both utter seclusion and all the amenities of a luscious hotel, it also has on hand a well-informed team of young naturalists to help you make sense of the wildlife.

Tea Country

THE AMBA ESTATE



IMAGE COURTESY OF AMBA ESTATE.

Just a short drive out of Ella lies the Amba Estate, which rather modestly defines itself as a farm stay. Set amidst lofty mountains, it is much more than that – a 130 acre organic farm, the centre of the growing artisanal tea movement on the island and a true

social enterprise that delivers on its stated mission: “to maximise local employment and incomes, while preserving and restoring the natural environment.”

With stunning walks and tea tasting like no other, a stay here gives you all the pleasure of earning a gold star, with none of the accompanying and often irksome typically effort.

CEYLON TEA TRAILS



IMAGE COURTESY OF CEYLON TEA TRAILS, HATTON.

Established by Resplendent Ceylon, Ceylon Tea Trails is a rare Sri Lankan inclusion in Relais & Châteaux's list of Leading Hotels. Based near Hatton, it comprises 5 separate planter's bungalows perched at 1,250 metres overlooking tea. It is the kind of place Louis XV might have dropped into for a decent cup had his armies ever strayed out of India in the 18th century.

THE GRAND HOTEL



A PHOTOGRAPH BY ALFRED WILLIAM AMANDUS PLATE OF THE GRAND HOTEL IN NUWARA ELIYA, TAKEN IN 1890-1910. PUBLIC DOMAIN

The definitive jewel in the collection of excellently run Tangerine Group Hotels, The Grand Hotel was built by the Duke of Wellington's adjutant, Sir Edward Barnes in 1828, a holiday home fit for the busy Colonial Governor he was. In his short time governing, he arranged the construction of the Colombo and Kandy

road, the first census of the population, and introduced coffee to the island.

By 1843 the home had become a hotel, to be added to over the decades with a Governor's Wing; a Southern Golf Wing, Tudor facades; and all the other opulent necessities of a first class colonial hotel.

Its Edwardian luxury is now mediated by such things as a Mindfulness Studio, a dizzying range of restaurants and bars, and gardens large enough to keep at bay the ever greater crowds who cleave to the cool climate of Nuwara Eliya

JETWING ST ANDREW'S



IMAGE COURTESY OF JETWING ST ANDREW'S, NUWARA ELIYA.

The Sri Lankan hotel chain, Jetwing, has made a potent name for itself by rolling out outstandingly good modern hotels. But - at least once - it has combined the best of this tradition with a rare historical twinning. St Andrew's, its Nuwara Eliya hotel, is one of the country's most iconic heritage hotels,

and began life in 1875 as the Scot's Club.

A somewhat tortuous life then lay before it – as a hotel flickering between boom and bust, a rest centre for soldiers and sailors, a refuge for Tamil labourers – before finally being bought by Jetwing in 1987.

Since then, it has gone from strength to elegant strength, big enough to be impressive but small enough to be personal

THE LIVING HERITAGE



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE LIVING HERITAGE HOTEL.

Tucked away inside an area known as God's Forest, Living Heritage is a most personal hotel, a one-off home-from-home type of place close to Adam's Peak and Lipton's Seat. With understated elegance and a focus on ecology sustainability, it connects its guests most gently to its wonderful surrounding wilderness.

98 ACRES RESORT & SPA



IMAGE COURTESY OF 98 ACRES RESORT & SPA.

Its panoramic lookouts stretch across and beyond its own 98 acres of tea near Ella that surround this organic grunge-lux hotel. Made up of a series of chalets perched on a hilltop, its style is laid out in generous helpings of real wood, granite, railway sleepers and large windows whose sweeping views will out compete most other holiday photographs.

East

JETWING SURF



IMAGE COURTESY OF JETWING SURF.

The 20 ocean facing cabanas of Jetwing Surf offer a deliciously comfortable and luxurious bolt hole from which to enjoy the surfing rigors of Arugam Bay.

THE SPICE TRAIL



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE SPICE TRAIL

Arugam Bay, rated as one of the top ten surf destinations in the world, remains – just – one of the surf world’s better kept secrets – but now is now beginning to attracts plane loads of dudes with

boards set upon a week or so skimming its waves. For most hotels, it remains frontier country but for those who wish to go a little further up the pecking order of comfort and luxury, it offers The Spice Trail, a hotel on the main beach with an ethos of local provision as to gladden even the hardest environmental heart.

UGA BAY



IMAGE COURTESY OF UGA BAY, PASIKUDA.

The beaches of the eastern seaboard are long, sandy, and little visited, though a number of group-oriented resorts have set up shop on its coves. The best however is not in the least bit group oriented. Uga Bay in Pasikuda is a rare hotel in the area because it

knows all about the magic “X” in “luxury” – as you would expect from an Uga branded hotel. Simple, sophisticated, and scenic, it gives you access to all the best sea sports, from a base of reassuring indulgence.

North

HERITANCE KANDALAMA



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE HERITAGE KANDALAMA.

The Kandalama Hotel is the indubitable jewel in a small group of large hotels owned by Aitken Spence and operated under the brand name Heritance. Aitken Spence is one of the island's most conscious conglomerates, with businesses in such diverse fields as plantations, garments, financial services – and, of

course, hospitality.

Overlooking a lake near Dambulla, the Kandalama has gained much of its reputation for being one of the unquestioned masterpieces created by the architect Geoffry Bawa.

Built in 1981, the hotel is literally wrapped around a cliff and so well planted that it is all but impossible to tell where nature ends, and the reception desk begins.

Across one kilometre, its one hundred and fifty two rooms rise up seven floors almost invisibly, the entire exterior of the building clad in jungle vegetation.

An architectural marvel, it has minimal environmental impact – yet within is everything you would expect of tropical modernism: simple, stunning, efficient, open. Its views over the great lake below are unmatched, as is the entertainment value of having a shower on the top floor with monkeys gambolling outside the windows.

JETWING LAGOON



IMAGE COURTESY OF JETWING LAGOON, NEGOMBO.

Facing the ocean on the further reaches of the Negombo Lagoon, Jetwing Lagoon is the best positioned and most restful of one of a number of Jetwing hotels in Negombo. It owes much of its stunning design to the fact that it was one of the first creations of the architect Geoffrey Bawa back in 1965, but it owes to Jetwing its abiding fine hospitality.

JETWING MAHESA BHAWAN



IMAGE COURTESY OF JETWING MAHESA BHAWAN, JAFFNA.

An art deco villa tucked away in Jaffna city, this Jetwing villas erves the sort of delicious Tamil food that necessitates a glad rescheduling of the rest of the day's activities. Few tourists venture as far north as Jaffna, but its dazzling history, kovils, shallow seas and fishermen's villages make it the sort of place wiser visitors might chose to retire to forever.

UGA ULAGALLA



IMAGE COURTESY OF UGA ULAGALLA, ANURADHAPURA.

If you have not spent time in Anuradhapura, you have not been to Sri Lanka. The ruins of this once-mighty capital are mesmerising and breathtaking – and Uga Ulagalla offers a rare touch of luxury within which to reflect on all that you might have seen. Set inside 60 acres, this restored 150 year old mansion is as good a reason to hope that the nascent Uga brand might go on creating more such lovely hotels.

THE WALLAWWA



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE WALLAWWA, NEGOMBO.

Despite being most conveniently close to Colombo's Bandaranaike Airport, Wallawwa is as far removed from a typical airport hotel as it is possible to get. An 18th century Negombo manor house, run with precision elegance by Teardrop Hotels, its eighteen rooms are the perfect place to land into if your flight to the island has proven to be too bumpy.

THE WATER GARDEN



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE WATER GARDEN HOTEL.

Created by the architect Channa Deswatte, and within sight of the vast rock fortress of Sigiriya, the Water Gardens comprises 30 villas artfully arranged around a series of lakes. Minimalist, low-key and calm, it is a happy place within which guests can recover from the often life-threatening climb to the top of Sigiriya Rock.



DISCOVER MORE

A small island surrounded by large oceans, Sri Lanka is a mystery to many: remote, hard to place; a well-kept secret. The Ceylon Press aims to make its complicated story more accessible.

Read its story in *A History of Sri Lanka*, or hear it as a podcast. The *Companion to Sri Lanka* makes visible more of the whole. The digital Museum of Sri Lanka unites the island's artefacts – scattered around the world – into a single exhibition. Its downloadable eBooks cover all Sri Lankan subjects. Its podcast, *Poetry from the Jungle*, presents the work of 80 poets to reset the literary canon. And in case it all gets too serious, enjoy the off-grid *Jungle Diaries* blog and Podcast. All these works are added to weekly and available free at theceylonpress.com.



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