THE FLAME TREE ESTATE & HOTEL

A COMPANION FOR GUESTS

"Not all who wander are lost."

ALICE IN WONDERLAND



'FOR YOUR GARDEN IS A KINGDOM, AND YOUR BEAUTY IS ITS QUEEN.'

ALICE IN WONDERLAND



USEFUL

WHERE'S WHERE

Surrounded by jungle, the 25-acre estate sits 1000 feet high on the Hill Country's first hills. In 1765, the Kandyan King stalled the Dutch Army in its valley, and Kandy's mayor built his country house here in 1930. Civil war ceded it to the jungle - until a major restoration reversed decades of weather & landslides. With help from architect Channa Daswatte, the 100-year-old Walawwa crumbles no more, and an Art Deco Pineapple House was added, along with an Amphitheatre and Pavilion.

GARDENS & PLANTATIONS

The hotel's gardens are shaded by frangipani and flame trees, with paths winding through lipstick palms, oranges, pomegranates and rare trees.

The hotel's Wellness Garden grows over 50 spice, herb & medicinal plants, and its nurseries and greenhouses propagate endangered trees. The hotel's many plantations are filled with tropical fruit trees, rubber, hardwoods, coffee, coconuts, pepper, clove and cinnamon; and its Spice Kitchen houses working rubber rollers manufactured in Wolverhampton in 1942.

SOUNDS

Our curated 1,000-track playlist mixes Jazz with Motown. Strange noises in the dark are usually porcupines or frogs in radiant song. Our Night Watchman, Wiji, is available through the night. Prayers often sound gently through the jungle - Buddhist monks on Poya days or musically minded Imams.

UTILITIES

Ceylon Electricity Ltd.'s supply breaks offer unrivalled opportunities to practice patience, but our electricity comes from a substation: when power cuts, the generator kicks in.

FEAST

Our food is made-to-order & unprocessed, using ingredients bought fresh from local businesses, specialist producers & a growing range of organic suppliers. Our kitchen is open to 9.30 pm. Please tell us if you are celebrating a special occasion so we can arrange something special, or if you have any dietary restrictions.

READING

Among our library's many hundreds of books is a complete set of the OED, useful for Scrabble.

SOLUTIONS

If anything is causing problems, please let us know so we can fix it quickly.

SWIMMING

A 17-metre infinity pool overlooks jungle, open 24/7, and shared with water-skimming swallows.

BILLS & TIPS

Bills are paid in the Hotel Office and include mandatory government taxes & Service Charge. All staff share service charge and tips equally. 1% goes into a Staff Welfare Fund to them address serious emergencies. Our policy nurtures nature by setting aside a % of every guest bill to fund the planting of endangered trees: 8,000 have already been planted, with more to come.

TRANSPORT & TOURS

Cheap taxis are available (Pick Me, Uber & Kangaroo), though hidden costs & poor timekeeping offset savings. We keep several trusted, well-known drivers on our books. Should you want to use them, obtain a quote, arrange a pickup or tour, contact the office.



ENJOY

AYURVEDA MASSAGE

The hotel offers on-site Ayurvedic Massage using bespoke organic oils from Sri Lanka's pioneering wellness company. Our on-call masseuses are trained in a full range of practices, including Panchakarma, Abhyanga, & Reflexology.

THE CHOCOLATE MASSAGE: Delicious in every way, cacao is more than mere aromatherapy. Its omega-6 fatty acids boost collagen production and firm up skin, whilst its antioxidants promote cell repair.

THE PAINKILLER MASSAGE: Chilli oil harnesses capsaicin to help reduce pain, inflammation, aches & cramps, while its high Vitamin C content can help regenerate skin.

TURMERIC COCONUT MASSAGE: Harnessing curcumin & coconut anti-ageing, detoxifying properties, this nourishing massage reduces inflammation and protects skin.

ABHYANGA MASSAGE: This classic Ayurvedic massage focuses on energy fields, applying pressure to the skin to help detoxify the body, improve circulation, release muscle tension and nourish skin.

SHAMPOOS & SOAPS

The natural antioxidants in our orange blossom & clove soap smell wonderful & promote healthy skin. Our rosemary shampoo & the natural compounds in our vanilla & coconut conditioner stimulate healthy hair.

YOGA

Noel leads our Hatha Yoga and has been practising yoga since he was eleven, training with yogic masters in Sri Lanka & India. His practice nurtures body & soul, stretching & rebalancing muscles while de-stressing the mind.

CINNEMON PEELING

The Hotel has several acres of cinnamon – book a time to learn how to harvest and peel it for yourself.

LEARN KANDYAN DANCING

Daminda and Thalagoda teach our dance lessons - their families experts for centuries. Book a lesson to tap into this remarkably thoughtful art form / work out and engage in rituals that bring blessings and heal ailments..

SRI LANKAN COOKING LESSONS

Learn how to cook classic village food in Bertie's Demonstration Kitchen, shaded by almond trees.

WALKS & HIKES

From gentle walks around the hotel estate to village, temple, jungle and country walks, plan an adventure through the Hotel office or butlers.

THE PODCAST THAT TELLS SRI LANKA'S STORY

The Sri Lanka Podcast is published by The Ceylon Press, a hotel-based digital publishing initiative. Download its eBooks, shows, histories & guides at srilankapodcast.com.





SENTIENT

PRIMATES & PAWS

Most of our team lives in the villages bordering the estate. Our butlers are Herath, Nandana, Lahiru & Thamod; our chefs Sudesh, Kasun, Dissanayake & Hashan; our outdoor team Ananda, Bandara, Janaka, Ruwan and Mahesh; our housekeepers Nadeeka, Chandra & Yassika. Ranjan Guruge is the Hotel Manager, and Malchan Silva his assistant. Our Business Manager is Chathuranga Wansapperuma, and his assistant is Mohamed Sadhik. Wiji is our Nightwatchman, and Manju Shantha is our Facilities Manager. Bianca heads our 5 Directors, married to Archibald. Their offspring include Bertie and Coco, whose daughter Nestor was mistakenly named after Tintin's perfect butler. The junior directors are Mikael, David & Ranjani.

WILD

Few comparable countries offer as diverse a range of mammals as Sri Lanka. Several endangered Toque macaque families live here, along with wild boar, squirrels, porcupines, deer, hare, rare lorises, guardian mongooses, civets, jungle and rusty-spotted cats. The estate's last working elephant is buried in the Spice Garden, superseded by pharaonic goats.

BREATH BETTER

Hundreds of the island's 7,500 plant species grow on the estate, especially its trees, which we keep adding to. Our favourites include CEYLON IRONWOOD; EBONY,snail-slow; JAK, the superfood; MAHOGANY, prized for its durability; MARA, whose leaves fold in rain; NANDU; perfumed SAPU; endangered SATINWOOD; papery TEAK; PALMS, Ruffled, Queen, Stilt, Golden, Fox Tail, Areca, Palmyra & Coconot; FLAME TREES & FRANGIPANI, of course; the sacred CANNONBALL; PINES from the Norfolk & Cook Islands; ACACIA, AFRICAN TULIP, JACARANDA, ILLAWARRA & KUKUL KAKUL. And growing over them all is that barometer of air quality, tender-hearted lichens.

CREATURES GREAT & SMALL

Owls call at night. Of Sri Lanka's 500 bird species, we've spotted over 50: eagles, parrots, hornbills, kingfishers, bee-eaters, barbets, flame-backs, bulbuls, babblers, sunbirds, & drongos. Of Sri Lanka's 208 reptile species, spot stylish skinks and colour-changing chameleons. monitor lizard and melancholy Geckos. Fireflies, bees, butterflies & moths abound, but of the island's 11,000 insect species, the estate is refreshingly free of mosquitoes.



COLLECTIONS

FURNITURE

19th & 20th century Ebony, Nadu, Burth, Satinwood, Mango, Teak, Mara, Mahogany, Jak, & Ebony Almirahs; 4-poster beds; Planters & Armchairs, Easy, Desk, Dining, & Occasional chairs & sofas; Card, Side, Dining, Bedside, Dressing, Vase & Coffee Tables; Pettegamas; Swedish Cabinets; bookcases, desks, trolleys & Ayurveda Dispensers.

FABRICS, SCROLLS & MAPS

An extensive collection of batiks by Ena De Silva; Vietnamese Tribal Tapestries; Barefoot wall-hangings; Embroidered Kandyan Bridal Clothes; Bengali Patachitra Scrolls & Ethiopian Goatskin Panels; 18th, 19th & early 20th century maps of S. Asia.

SCULPTURES, PANELS, LIGHTS

Sculptures from Rajasthan, Chettinad, Beijing, Calcutta, Cochin, Cairo, Java, Jaffna, Madras & Lebanon; Kandian Lion Guardians; Agaria Panels – and The Dying Gaul, a 19th-century Hellenistic bronze. Sri Lankan & Persian Painted Panels; 19th century & Art Nouveau Spanish & Beijing Screens; 17th century Dutch Coats of Arms; Art Deco flag poles; 1920s French Gold Heliconia Lights; Arab & Swedish Chandeliers; Art Deco, Victorian, Indian & French table lights; Edwardian, Rajasthan, Art Deco & French Mirrors.

LITHOGRAPHS, PHOTOGRAPHS

Indian, Japanese & Scandinavian Woodcuts; Lithographs by Picasso, Chagall, Warhol, Genbers, Zollofi, Saskia Pintelon; from Imperial India, the Middle East, Florence, London, Mallorca, Auroville; The Engeström Palace. 19th & 20th century engravings; early Daguerreotypes & Photographs from Sweden, India & Sri Lanka; 1960s propaganda posters.

CERAMICS & CURIOS

Ceramic Bowls, Jugs, Plates & Sculptures from Europe & Asia; early 20th century English & Swedish clocks; Orrefors & Kosta Boda cut glass; Welsh Urns, Damascene Boxes, Afghani Trays; Art Deco & Imperial Indian silver; 19th century Swedish cutlery, Bowls, & Goblets - and a 6th century BCE ceramic Sri Lankan animal statue.

PAINTINGS

Paintings by GM Henry; Inken Engeström, Ebba Ramen, Margarethe Eckhart, Rajni Perera, Jagath Ravindra, Dilini Paragahawaththage, Gathika Wikramarathne, Chammika Jayawardena, Kasun Wickramasinghe; Monastic, Tribal, Magic Realism & primitive Christian sketches & drawings by Conrad Romyn.



INSTANT

SERENE

Halcyon calm - the 400-year-old Galayawe temple: stupa, monastery, kindergarten, clinic, museum.

DRESSY

Six ancient wooden looms weave handsome handlooms - & sell its finely crafted fabrics.

A WIZARD OF WOOD

A modest shelter where Mahinda Jayalath carves his treasures - or even your special commissions.

THE ABANDONED MANSION

A haunting 1820s abandoned Walawwa.

GALAGEDERA VILLE

A thriving high street of shops, cafes, grocers, schools, ayurveda medicine, goldsmiths, pharmacies, pawnbrokers, banks, spice merchants, & barbers.

THE KING'S SECRET CAVE

Lofty views at Gunadaha, the hideaway of one of Lanka's most unlucky kings, who built a guerrilla resistance to force out invading Tamils.

A JUNGLE WALK

Stroll through plantations of rubber, cinnamon, paddy, jungle and back via tiny hamlets to the hotel.

WALKING THE ESTATE

A 30-minute wander through the estate's varied plantations.


KANDY

THE RED MOSQUE
Candy-striped façades in reds & whites.

SLIGHTLY CHILLED
Kandy's best rooftop bar & eatery.

THE SEA OF MILK
Kandy Lake & its dramatic Cloud Wall.

THE ROYAL BAR & HOTEL
A striking walawwa and perfect snack stop. Waluwa (or mansion) spotting is a rewarding game: Ehelepola Walauwa, Dunuwille Walauwa, Giragama Walauwa.

THE TOOTH FAIRY
Dr Diane's Dentistry: supreme calm amidst inevitable odontic anguish.

THE CHURCH OF ST PAUL
Kandy's Anglican Church, with vast wrought-iron gates, fabricated in faraway Edwardian England.

THE TEMPLE OF THE TOOTH
Home to the island's most precious possession, the tooth of Lord Buddha.

THE LAST PALACE
The palace of the last kings of Kandy – buildings of zen-like patrician elegance.

THE SHOP THAT NEVER ENDS

From ancient flags to paintings, jewellery & curios, Waruna's cavernous shop is an Aladdin's Cave of genuine finds.

BIRD SPOTTING

The country's loveliest bird forest - Udawattakele, home to 80 bird species.

THE QUEEN'S HOTEL

Once a mansion for British Governors, now a hotel overlooking temple, lake, & palace.

KATARAGAMA DEVALAYA

Kandy's 18C Hindu shrine enlivened by carvings, & colours chosen to banish grey forever.

THE BRITISH GARRISON CEMETERY

Home to almost 200 souls since 1817.

MALWATU MAHA VIHARAYA

The headquarters of the Buddhist Malwatta chapter of Siyam Nikaya - the most established of establishment orders.

ASIA'S BEST GARDEN

Peradeniya Royal Botanical Gardens, the best botanical gardens in Asia



SIGIRIYA & DAMBULLA

THE PLEASURE PALACE

Palace, fortress, art gallery, Sigiriya is undoubtedly one of ancient Asia's Seven Great Wonders. Its destruction around 500 CE ended one of the most remarkable reigns the ancient Sri Lankan kingdom had yet enjoyed.

Its walls still display paintings of the king's harem- among the oldest surviving frescoes of Asia. And, accompanying them, ancient graffiti including one forlorn poet who wrote:

"May you remain for a thousand years, like the figure of the hare the King of the gods painted on the orb of the moon, though that to my mind be like a single day"

THE CAVES OF GOD

The labyrinthine temples of Dambulla are Sri Lanka's version of the Sistine Chapel - and South Asia's most remarkable cave temples. Dating back well over 2,000 years, with every inch of wall space covered in paintings and statues, they are a place of infinite stillness and breathtaking art.



CLOSE AT HAND

GANGSTER OR SAINT?
Saradiel: home of Sri Lanka's Robin Hood.

HANTANA
Seven peaks: over 100 bird species and, rumour has it, leopards.

TREASURE:
Mulachari's lost masterpiece at Embekke Devale: 500 antique, exquisitely carved statues.

BALANA
Ruins of the 2000 ft high fort that foiled repeated colonial invasions.

THE BRASS & COPPER VILLAGE
Keeping the designs of the Kandyan kings alive.

LOST MASTERPIECES
The island's most significant medieval temples - Lankatilaka & Gadaladeniya Vihara.

TEA, GLORIOUS TEA
Explore Loolecondera, where tea began,Hantana Tea Estate & Museum & Giragama Tea Plantation.

BIBLE ROCK
A 5,500 ft Table Mountain lookout post for kings

THE ALAGALLA MOUNTAINS
Trekker's paradise & home to endemic animals.

FAIRTRADE FAB

Seylan: the country's only Fairtrade handloom maker: striking clothes, toys, and cloth.

THE KING'S SILVER TEMPLE

The silver mined here 2,200 years ago financed the creation of the island's great stupa.

KADUGANNAWA

The Victorian Triple Arches Bridge lost in the jungle - home also to the Railway Museum & Victorian Kadugannawa Pass.

OUR LADY OF LANKA

The tranquil National Seminary overlooks the panoramic beauty of the Dumbara Valley.

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

In sorrow - but not disorder - lie two hundred of the eighty-five million victims of World War Two.

GNOME MOUNTAIN

Kandy is home to the tallest Lord Buddha statue.

ELEPHANTS ENCOUNTERS

The Millennium Elephant Sanctuary – feed, walk and bathe with elephants.

PINNEWALA

Be awed by seeing elephants bathing at the Elephant Orphanage.

THE FLAME TREE ESTATE & HOTEL

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EXPERIENCES AT THE FLAME TREE ESTATE & HOTEL

book something wonderful

