



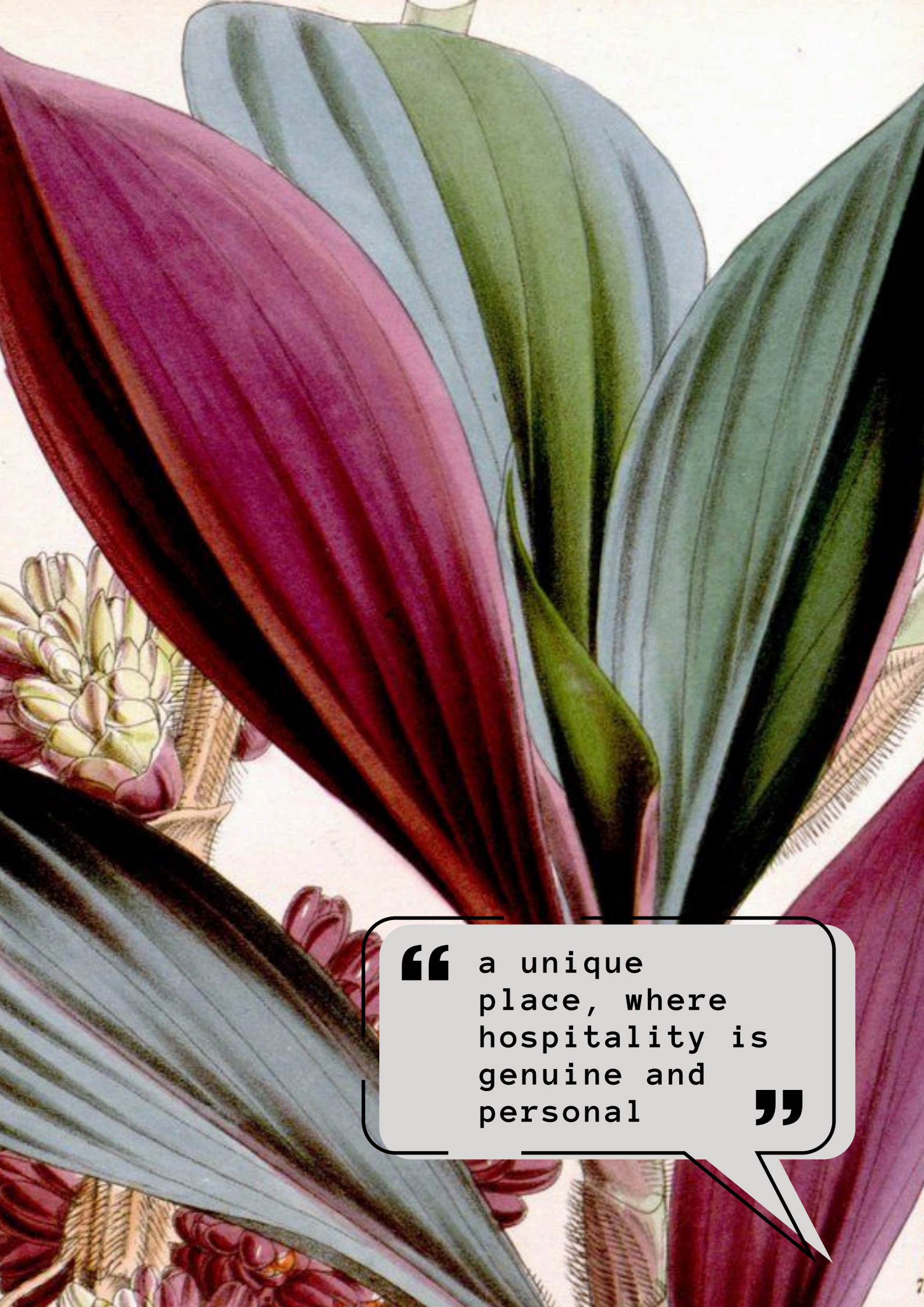
THE FLAME TREE HERALD TRIBUNE

IN
THIS
EDITION

news, views,
reviews,
& off - grid
jungle intel

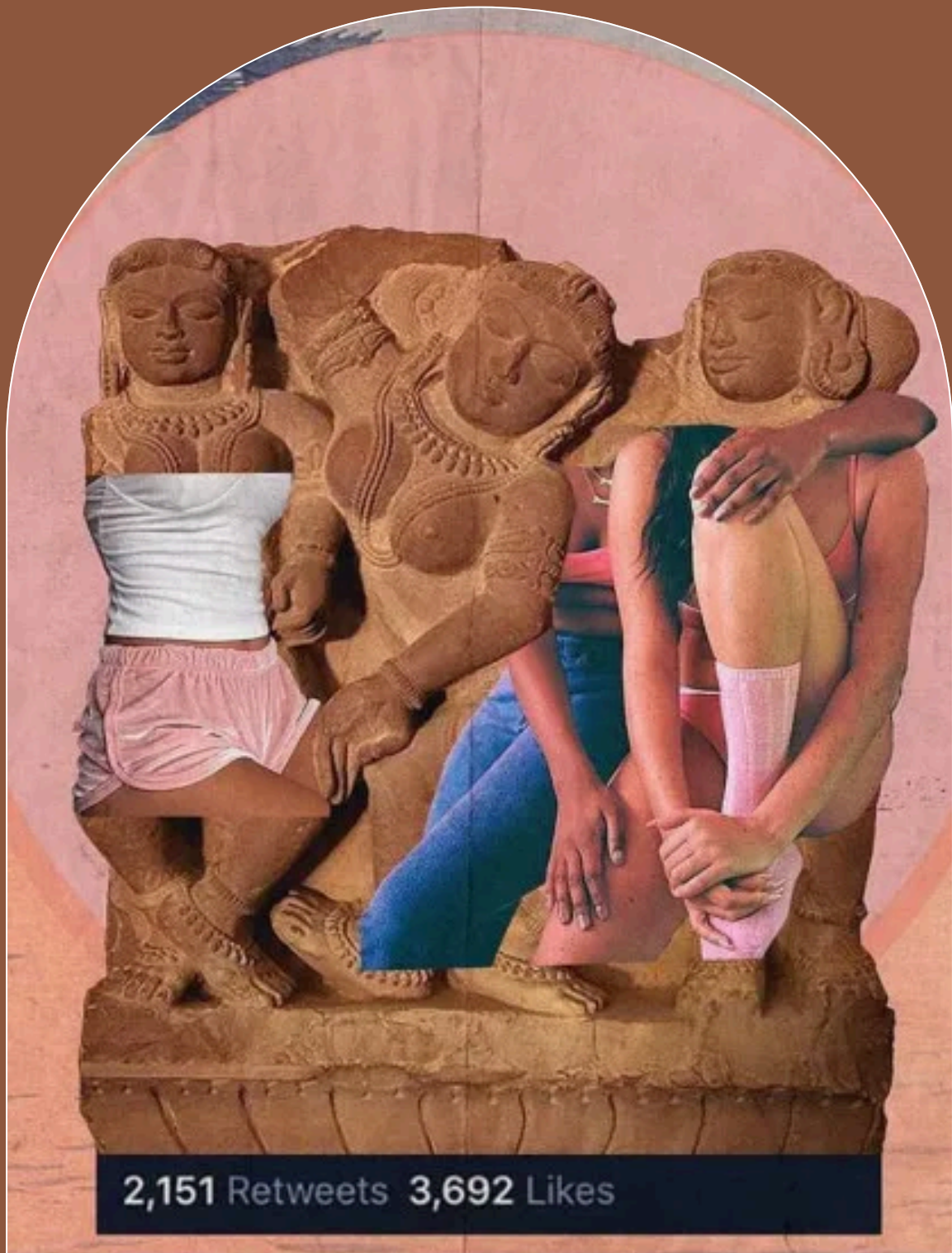
ELEGANTLY AVIAN
THE THOUGHTFUL SPICE
THE KILLER QUEEN
THE ISLAND'S GREAT RIVERS
MUVINDU BINOY

November 2025 flamefreestate.com



“ a unique
place, where
hospitality is
genuine and
personal ”

MUVINDU BINOY



Little prepares you for the shock, joy, humour, and Alive-in-Wonderland reimagining of all that ever passed for normal on first encountering one of Muvindu Binoy's paintings. Born in 1989 and one of the most exciting of the country's contemporary artists, his work runs from painting to digital, canvass to film, pop to classical, mass consumerism to private expressionism. Nothing is off-limits for this most unbound of artists.

“... a masterpiece:
furnished with
eclectic art, antique
furniture and a
modern touch that
perfectly blends
tradition and
comfort.”



ELEGANTLY AVIAN



The Giant Flying Squirrel is the most elegantly avian of the squirrels found on the island, which has evolved a remarkable wing membrane between its limbs to enable it to glide like the 1891 Lilienthal Glider that marked man's first recoded flight, near Potsdam.



There are two species on the island. The smaller one is very rare indeed; and was thought to be extinct until it was rediscovered in Sinharaja in 1989.

It cousin, the Grey Flying Squirrel, is larger and much more common, dark silver-grey with large eyes, fond of leaves, insects and mangos. Because it glides rather than flies, it appears almost without notice hovering over you but can be hard to spot as it is something of a night clubber. We have seen them wafting like furry fairies or angles in the forested hills around the estate.



“

you can feel
the passion
in every
detail

”

ROAST CHICKEN BREASTS ON BARLEY RISOTTO



A NEW DISH OUR
CHEFS ARE TRAILING

Pearl Barley; Leeks; Garlic Cloves; Chicken Stock; Cream; Salt; Pepper;
Chicken Breasts; Lemon; Spice Of Your Choice

“ My suite was spacious and impeccable: Super comfortable king-size bed, luxurious bathroom with outdoor shower, and high-quality products. ”



RENAISSANCE WOMAN

JEAN ARASANAYAGAM



A renaissance woman who possessed formidably empathic talents, Jean Arasanayagam was one of the country's celebrated tribe of Dutch burgers. Born in Kandy in 1931, she died in 2019, her literacy legacy largely drawn from brave, raw poetry that tackled, without the even a hint of pink romantic tincture or bravado, the country's many tribulations, war, poverty, and loss.



Her fiction was a much rarer gift, just as heart stoppingly lyrical - and almost as gritty. Her most popular fiction is "All is Burning," published in 1995, was collection of short stories drawn from the lives of Sri Lankans striving for some kind of sense and rationale during the terrible Civil war. Despite the book's title, hope still, occasionally, shines.

Similar themes were followed up in 2000 with "In the Garden Secretly and Other Stories;" and "A Nice Burgher Girl," published in 2006, an atypical full novel and a most personal one at that, offering a glimpse of what it was like to grow up as part of a minority in old Ceylon. But sadly, much of her most compelling fiction is hard to find, let alone buy, including "Peacocks and Dreams," "The Outsider," "The Cry of the Kite," and "Inheritance."

Perhaps someone, somewhere, in some distant gleaming corporate publishing office in New York or London, could put this to right by sprinkling the most modest of this year's profits on bringing back to print this much needed important backlist – just for the love of literature? Her poetry alone deserves it. "The Brahmin chants his / Pooja to the gods, camphor / And incense stream out / Of the stone door into the evening light," she writes in "Other Poems," truly a pioneer of Sri Lankan writing in English, who did so much to place it on the global literary map.



“ Beautifully renovated colonial property and perfect place to relax and disconnect away from the hustle and bustle of Kandy.”



LASCARINS

A Portuguese term used in Sri Lanka to mean soldier or guard, and later adapted by the Dutch as *lascorijn*; and by the British as *lascariin* or *lascar*. In its original Portuguese sense it referred specifically to the local soldiers they recruited to overcome their chronic manpower shortages as they fought for control of the Kotte and Kandyan kingdom. Most lascarinns were Catholic converts and they made up, numerically, the vast bulk of the Portuguese colonial army.

They were notorious for abruptly changing sides, most sensationally at the Battle of Gannoruwa in 1638, a defining moment in the Portuguese withdrawal from the island which left just 33 soldiers alive from an initial force of 4,000. Under Dutch rule these soldiers were organised into groups of 24 led by two or three native headmen. Under British rule these soldiers morphed into ceremonial roles though some were retained as bodyguards for Mudaliyars, the most powerful native families.

“ A
perfect
stay . ”



MONARCH OF THE MONTH

ANULA, QUEEN OF ANURADHAPURA

Anula, Queen of Anuradhapura was to leave a mark on queenship that would take the office centuries to recover from. She began her royal career in 50 BCE by poisoning her Vijayan husband, Choura Naga, King of Anuradhapura. She was to repeat the same tried and trusted trick in 47 BCE by poisoning his successor, Kuda Thissa. Choosing at this point to rule from a distance, she appointed her lover Siva, as ex palace guard, to be king in 47 BCE before having him poisoned. Thereafter the pattern was set. Siva I was himself poisoned within a year and replaced by a new lover, Vatuka, who had till then been living the probably blameless life of a Tamil carpenter. The following year the carpenter was replaced in similar fashion by Darubhatika Tissa, a wood carrier – who also failed to measure up. Her last throw of the love dice was Niliya, a palace priest who she installed as king in 44 BCE before feeding him something he ought not to have eaten.

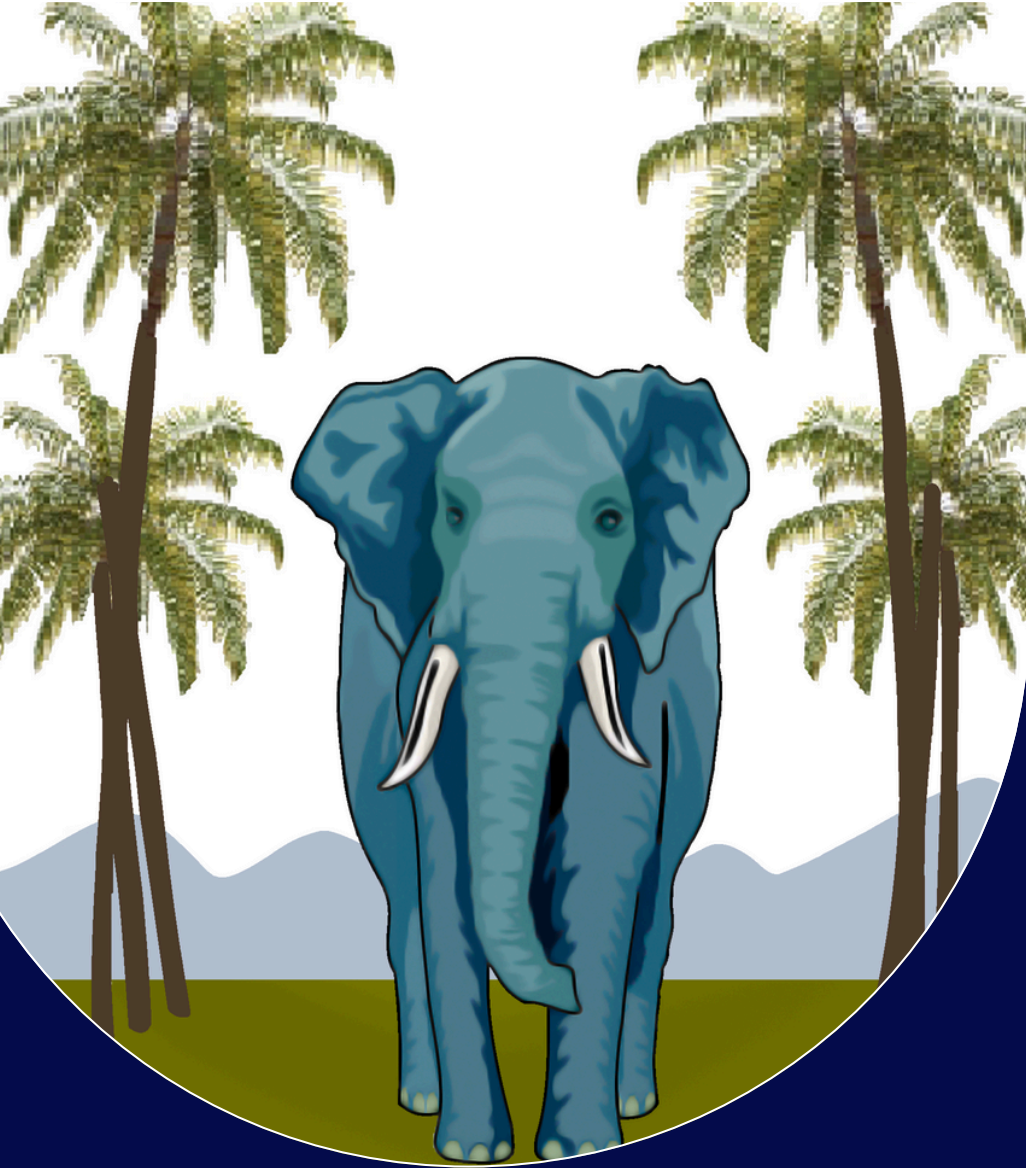
At this point Anula must have reached the logical conclusion: if you want something done well, do it yourself. And so, from 43 to 42 BCE she ruled in her own name, the country's first female head of state, beating President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga by well over two thousand years. Anula's own reign ended at the hands of her brother-in-law, Kutakanna Tissa, who, having sensibly become a Buddhist monk during Anula's rocky reign, remained alive and so able to rescue the monarchy. He did so by burning the queen alive in her own palace in 42 BCE, bringing down the curtains on a royal career that eclipsed that of the entire Borgia clan put together.



“ Thank you for
everything, we
will come
back. ”



THE PORTUGUESE EMBLEM OF CEYLON



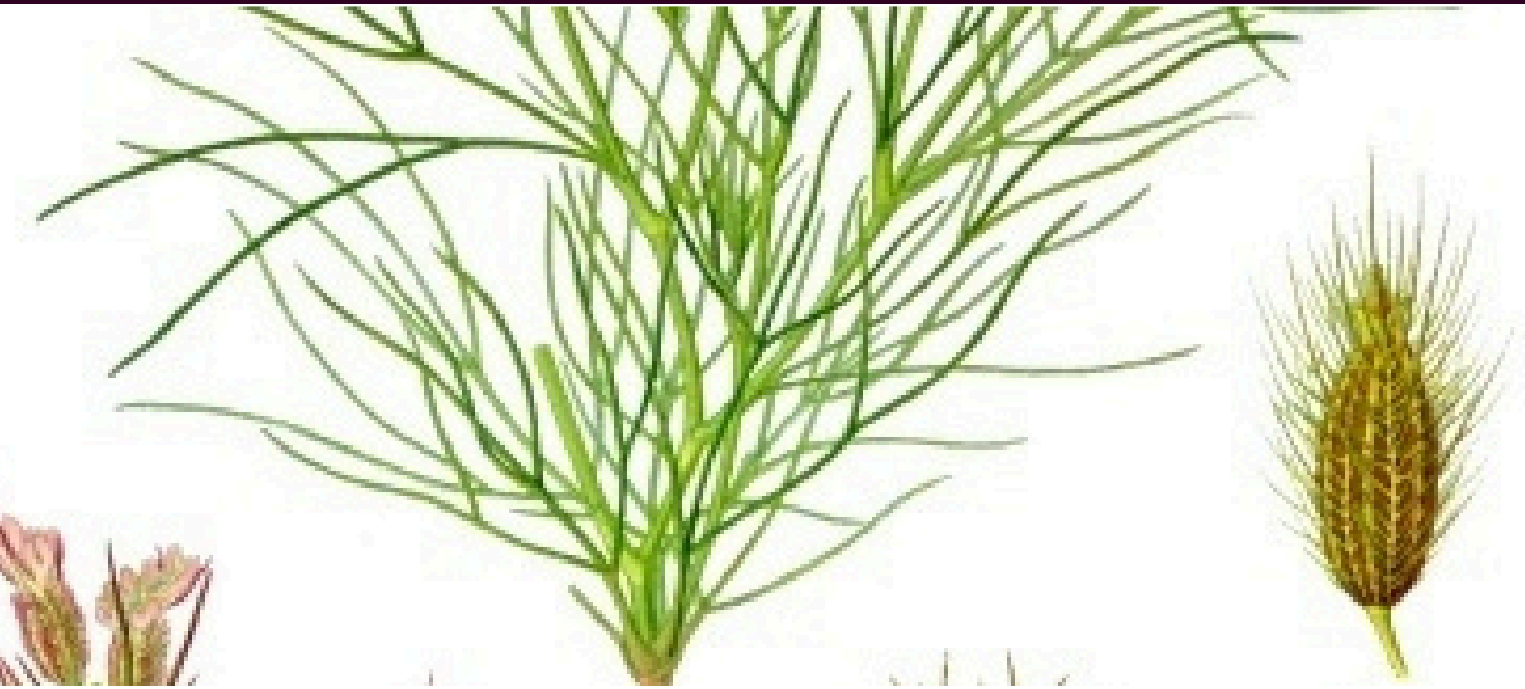
From 1505 to 1658 the flag that fluttered over Portuguese Ceylon was identical to the one that flew over Portugal itself, featuring 7 gold castles and 5 blue shields within a red shield surmounted by a crown. But the emblem they used to rule the country was very different, displaying an elephant walking through palm trees with mountains behind.





“ Everything was
spotless, with
perfect air
conditioning
and Wi-Fi.

”



CUMIN



Nutty, warm, slightly bitter and, when toasted, very aromatic, the spice Cumin it lingers on your palate reminding you gladly of epicurean pleasures only just past. A prominent member of the parsley family, it appears to have rapidly spread from its home base around the Mediterranean to take over the entire world.

Clocking up a value of almost two billion dollars annually, its production is led by India, with Sri Lanka producing barely enough for its own consumption. Traditional medicines use it for pain relief, and digestive problems. Modern science has fixed on its principal compounds - thymoquinone and cuminaldehyde - to disentangle its likely abilities as an anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, anti-diabetic, and anti-cancer agent. As a cooking ingredient, it stars especially in Indian, Mexican, African, Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern dishes and it is no stranger to ambitious chefs either, featuring in trophy dishes like Chocolate and Cumin Fudge, Golden Lassi, Hazelnut Butter, and traditional sausage rolls. In Sri Lanka it is so loved that it forms a key ingredient in Thuna Paha, the top go-to island curry powder used in countless local recipes.

“ The 5 playful
and loving
terriers were
wonderful. **”**



THE SECOND WONDER

Despite their iconic status, the original seven wonders of the ancient world come up short when compared to the seven wonders of ancient Lanka.

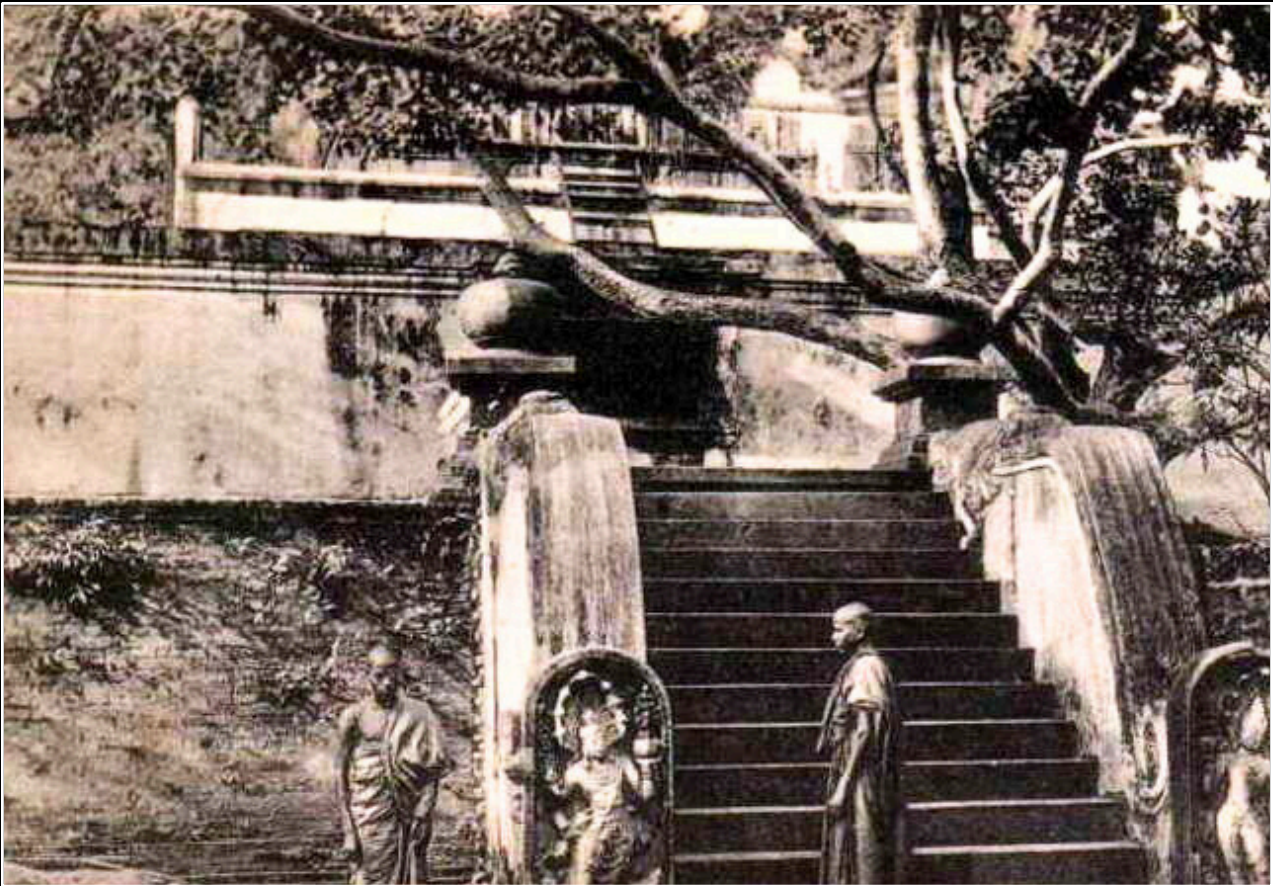
The world's first Seven Wonders comprised a garden, two tombs, two statues, a temple, and a lighthouse. It featured the Pyramids of Giza, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Statue of Zeus at Olympia, the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, the Colossus of Rhodes, and the Lighthouse of Alexandria. Sri Lanka's list, though, is not all architecture with a nod to gardens – it is comprehensive, including as it does a painting, a monastery, a book, a piece of revolutionary new technology that enabled a treasured dish, a shrine, a tree, and a lake.

Its first great wonder was a lake - Panda Wewa; and it was 250 years after this that Sri Lanka's second greater wonder appeared, an import that, in going native, came to symbolise everything about the land, then as now. No building this, nor even a book or garden, but a tree, a single tree – the Sri Maha Bodhi, The Tree Of Enlightenment, an A list celebrity tree to outshine anything anywhere else in the world; not just Sri Lanka's oldest living tree, but also the oldest recorded tree on earth.

As a tree, it gained its bloodline from the bodhi tree in Bihar under which Lord Buddha sat sometime around 500 BCE prior to attaining his enlightenment, a nirvana of not inconsiderable benefits, including a full understanding the true nature of everything. Its illustrious history aside,

THE 7 WONDERS OF ANCIENT LANKA





the near relatives of bodhi trees are arguably more beautiful, including, as they do, figs, banyans, breadfruits, jacks, mulberries. But history is rarely written by the beautiful. It is the survivors that get to tell the story and although there is no such thing as an average life span for a tree, the bodhi tree squats confidently at the extreme end of the spectrum, living for anything up to 3,000 years. It can tell stories that would put Scheherazade herself to sleep.

The bodhi still growing in Anuradhapura dates back to 236 BCE. At the time of its arrival, the country was still making tentative if immutable steps as an embryonic nation; and its appearance was to coincide with the reign of the island's eighth recorded king, Devanampiya Tissa. It arrived just a few years after Buddhism itself arrived on the island, protolyzed by Mahindra, the son of the Indian Emperor Ashoka. Clearly, the young missionary had painted a compelling picture of his new island abode in his letters home for he was soon joined by his sister, Sanghamitta. She brought with her a golden vase in which grew a sapling of Lord Buddha's original Bodhi-Tree. Accompanied by nuns and an entourage of useful craftsmen, Sanghamitta landed in the north of the island and was met by King Devanampiya Tissa himself. With some ceremony, he escorted the party to Anuradhapura along a road said to have been softened with white sand (an enhancement that the present day Road Development Agency might take note of); and the Bodhi sapling was planted in the city's Mahameghavana Grove.

The world that this tiny tree then looked out upon was already more than a little magnificent. From its plot stretched a new and constantly enlarging city, the creation of Pandukabhaya, a staggering construction by any measure.

As the ancient Athenians were putting the finishing touches to the Acropolis and the nascent Roman Republic issuing its first tentative laws, the palaces, and structures commissioned by Sri Lanka's first great king rose up through the jungle, a tropical Versailles. Beyond its walls and moats stretched the Rajarata, the land ruled by the king, extending from the northern tip of the island to incorporate most of the island with the likely exception of the impenetrable hill country and the far south – Ruhana.

The small bodhi tree's very survival depended on all the components of a flourishing nation – a caring and calibrated civil service, and phenomenally effective water management to feed the growing state. This in turn was enabled by international trade, culture, writing and an evolving new language – Sinhala; by roads, hospitals, horticulture, and an engineering capability that was able to assemble large stone palaces and temples. Surrounded by such professionalism, it is little wonder it flourished, and, in a sense, arrived just as the party began.

Many successive kings enriched the land on which it grew. Magnificent stone and later metallic statues were positioned around it, along with a fine canal and walls to protect it from wild elephants; a protective barrier mirrored as recently as 1969 by a golden fence. Now positioned on a high terrace, surrounded by 4 other terraces, its temple is one of the country's most sacred sites; and from its vantage point it has borne witness to almost all of recorded island history: two thousand three-hundred-years of it.

The tree itself is managed by priests, supported by a committee, and a panels of experts and agencies within the government's environment ministry. It has given rise to innumerable other direct descendants, thirty two of which are notable trees in their own right.



“

... the food
was the best
we had in Sri
Lanka

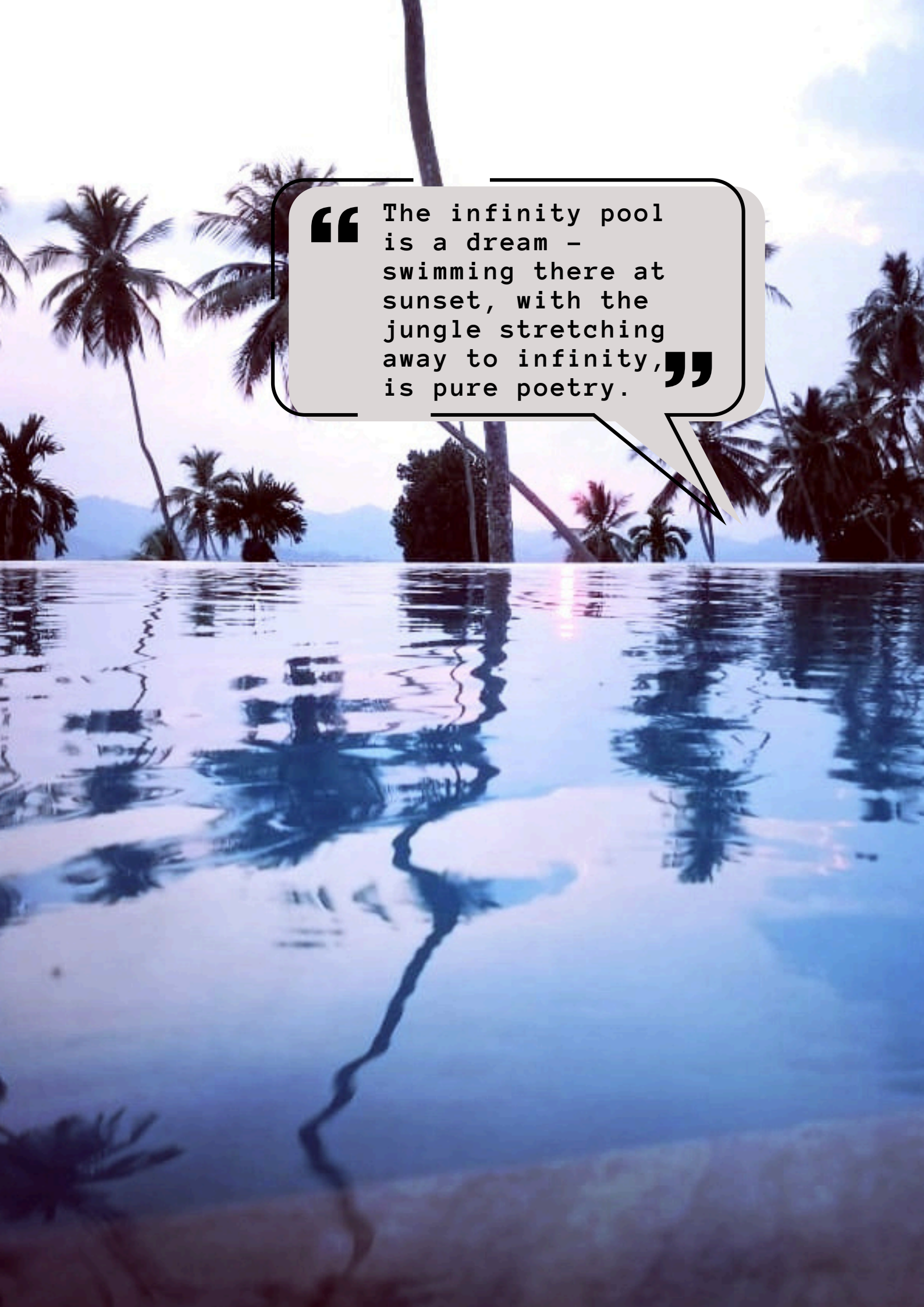
”



THE MADURU OYA



At one hundred and thirty-six kilometres, the Maduru Oya is the country's eighth longest river, collecting its waters in the mountains beyond Mahiyanganaya, halfway from Kandy to the Indian Ocean at Batticaloa. The streams around its nursery collection points are much revered, being said to have once hosted Lord Buddha himself who came to settle a dispute between warring tribes. All along the dry scrubland banks that enclose it can be found the ruins of the outer most reaches of the Anuradhapuran Kingdom – including sixth century irrigation structures – bisokotuwas, built to maximise drainage - that it took the west a hundred years more to invent. The river drains out at Kalkudah, a small town surrounded by beaches still abandoned since the ending of the civil war.

A serene tropical landscape at sunset. In the foreground, a calm infinity pool reflects the sky and the surrounding palm trees. The water is a deep blue, mirroring the twilight sky. In the background, a dense line of palm trees stands against a soft, orange and pink sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright reflection on the water. The overall mood is peaceful and idyllic.

“ The infinity pool
is a dream -
swimming there at
sunset, with the
jungle stretching
away to infinity,
is pure poetry.”

AYUBOWAN

Chathuranga
Wansapperuma

FINANCE MANAGER
+94 71 407 6666

finance
@flametreeestate.com

Angelo
Perera

GENERAL MANAGER
+ 94 77 189 8586
generalmanager
@flametreeestate.com

Ranjan
Guruge

OPERATIONS MANAGER
+94 71 704 3980

operations
@flametreeestate.com

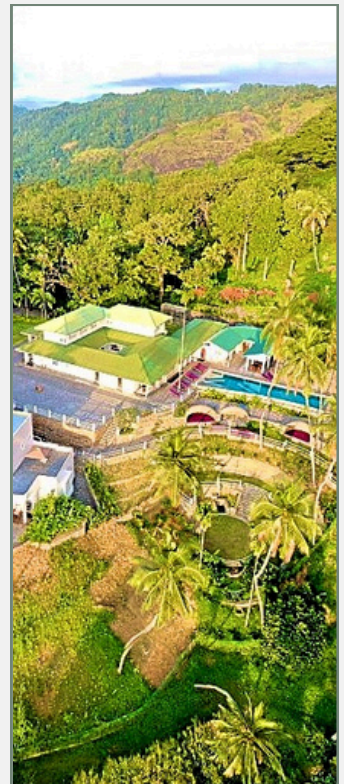


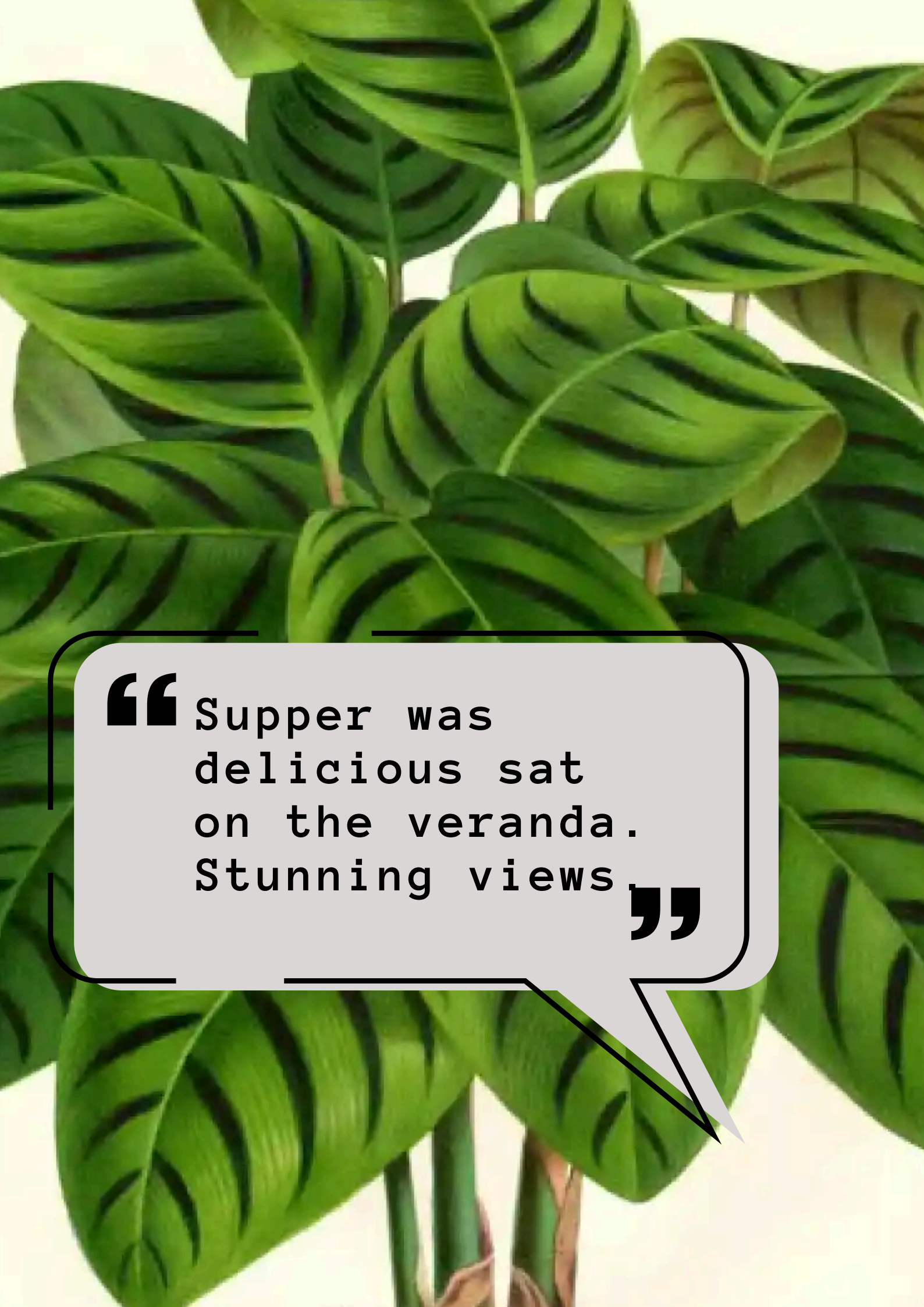
The Flame Tree Estate & Hotel

Mudunhena Walawwa
Galagedera 20100
Kandy, Sri Lanka

Main Office Landline
+ 94 81246 1265

www.flametreeestate.com





“ Supper was
delicious sat
on the veranda.
Stunning views **”**