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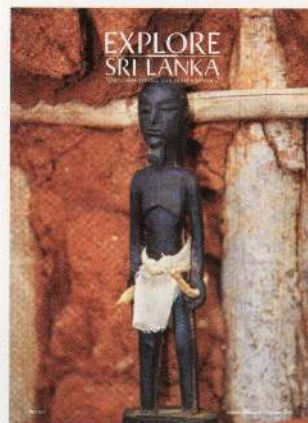
OCTOBER 2011

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Tannivelle Devalaya

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A wood carving by the artisans of Kotabakina
Photograph: Indika De Silva

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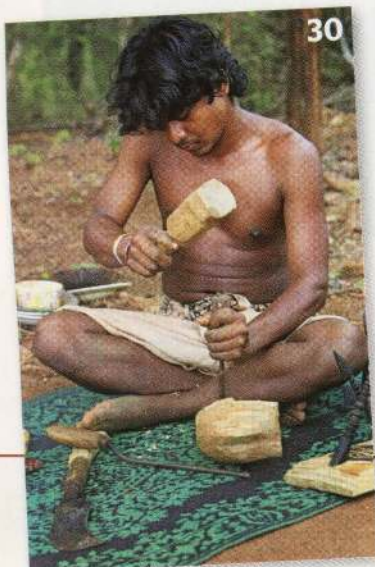
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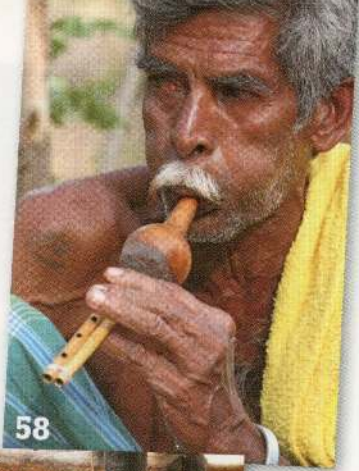
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EXPLORE SRI LANKA
What's On



EVENTS HAPPENING
IN COLOMBO
IN THE MONTH OF
OCTOBER, MAP OF
SRI LANKA,
TRAVEL TIPS AND
FLIGHT TIMES.

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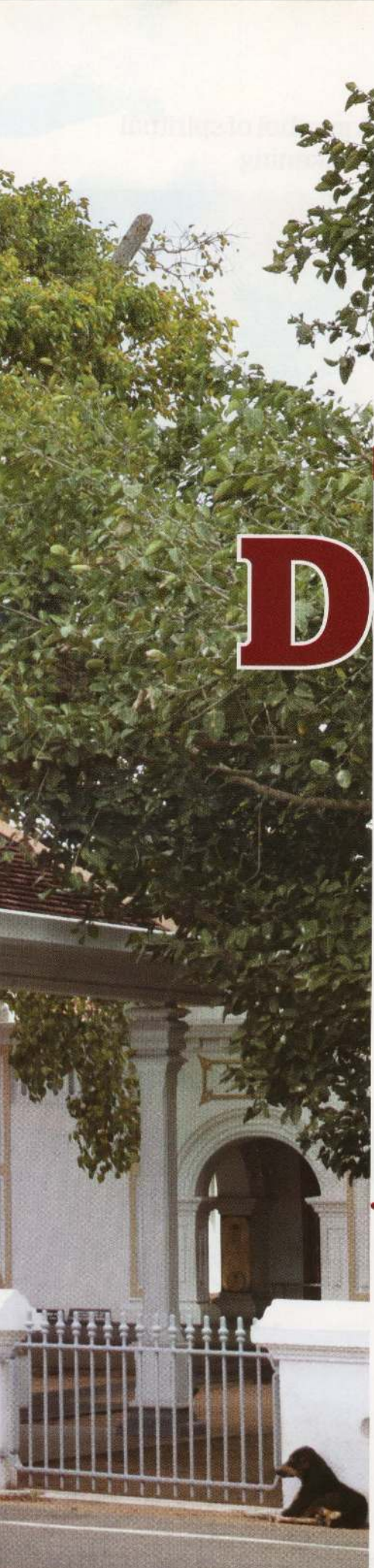
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A few passersby stand at the entrance to the sacred Tamivelle Devalaya



Tannivelle Devalaya

A symbol of history
entwined with sanctity

At the threshold of a quiet suburb lies a spiritual sanctuary enveloped with mysteries and historical memories of a legendary Prince and his gallant white horse; a Prince that touched the hearts of an ancient community with his benevolent and heroic acts, whose blessings and protection are invoked even today by a grateful and devoted people.

Words Shehara de Mel Photographs Prabath Chathuranga

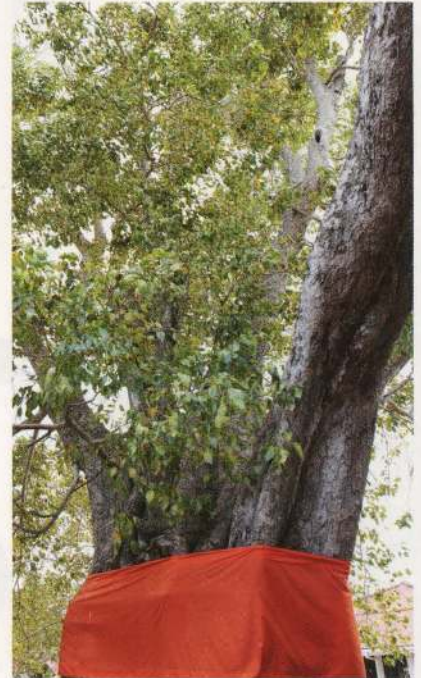
Sitting serenely, embraced by the waters of the Thinipiti Wewa is a place of devotion, worship and mystical sanctity; the Tannivelle Devalaya. It is a prominent sight in the town of Madampe beckoning those who pass by to break their journey and

pay obeisance to the divine powers sheltered within. People from various backgrounds, faiths and beliefs flock to the Devalaya to offer their humble worship and respect and it is this rare sight that spurs one to venture in and discover its mystery.



A lifesize sculpture of the legendary white horse, a distinctive symbol of the past

A symbol of spiritual awakening



The majestic Bodhi tree

The tale of a Warrior Prince

Steeped in historical tales and influence, the Devalaya was originally built in recognition of Prince Taniya Vallabha, a legendary figure during the Kotte Kingdom renowned in the region for his heroic and gallant efforts. The son of the second queen of Viraparakramabahu VIII, the Prince was appointed Viceroy of the Madampe region. Famed among the community for fearlessly driving away foreign invaders and restoring traditional lands, Prince Taniya Vallabha reconstructed ancient tanks, repaired small village tanks and provided sufficient water for cultivation. In honour of his efforts and great benevolence, the people built the Devalaya paying him obeisance as Tannivelle Deviyo. It is dedicated as a place of religious ritual by a grateful people whose belief that offering worship to Tannivelle Deviyo

would give them bountiful harvest and success in their endeavours.

Intrigued by the sculpture of the white horse, visitors gather around to explore this illustrious symbol belonging to that era. According to folklore, the Prince was a great warrior often seen riding his majestic white horse. Many therefore claim that they have seen the supernatural sighting of the Tannivelle deity floating through the air on horseback during the time of the annual harvest. Mystified by this tale, many stood still, gazing beyond the giant horse towards the glistening waters of the tank, imagining a visual of the deity floating through the air on a white horse. Their wonderment was a spectacle for devotees gracing the shrine, but only for a moment; nothing, not even a few wide-eyed visitors could distract them from their sacred rituals.

Spreading its branches like the wings of an eagle and sheltering the Devalaya is the Bodhi tree, believed to be more than 250 years old. Its looming presence exudes strength and majesty, a testament of its divine power. An offshoot of its tree stands closeby. While much of the structures in the Devalaya have been constructed or improved by the Tannivelle Maha Devalaya Trust that ancient aura of holiness and devotion is still maintained.

The legendary Tannivelle Devalaya





The Tannivelle Deity

The Tannivelle Shrine

The main shrine known as the Tannivelle Devalaya, is dedicated to the deified Prince and contains the statue of the deity, symbolic weapons and regal ornaments belonging to the Prince. Faithful believers stand before the shrine paying reverence to the Tannivelle Deviyo while others break coconuts as a ritual to ward off evil. The door to the inner shrine of the

Devalaya is opened to the public on Wednesdays and Saturdays as a special pooja is conducted. Ornaments including symbolic weapons enshrined within the Devalaya are taken out once a year and washed in fragrant water during the 'Nanumura Mangalya', a special festival held in August attracting thousands of devotees.



A devotee performing a ritual to invoke the blessings of the gods



Ribbons tied to the Nuga tree symbolising vows made by devotees



A faithful believer drops a coin into the till

Two faiths interwoven under one sanctuary



The Samadhi Vihara, sheltered under the branches of the Bodhi tree

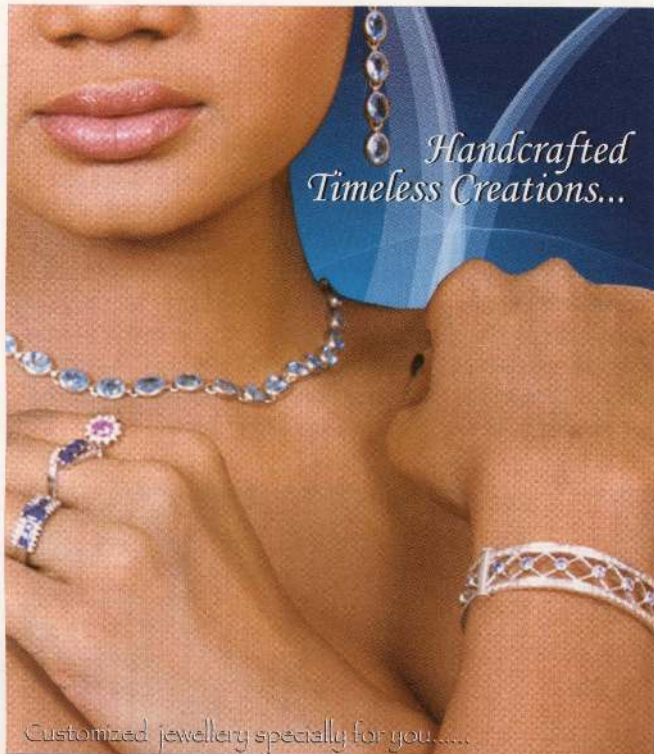
A few steps away from the Tannivelle Devalaya lies the Kadawara Devalaya dedicated to the Kadawara Deviyo. This sacred shrine, with a white and copper exterior, is graced by a number of people offering worship and reverence. Resting in the shadows at the edge of the site is a Nuga tree, adorned with colourful ribbons and pieces of cloth. These serve as signs of vows made by people in return for blessings and protection. Displaying the strong historical connection between Buddhism and Hinduism, a new addition adjoins the wall surrounding the Bodhi tree: the Vihara or shrine sheltering the Samadhi Buddha statue. A tiny structure at the rear end of the Devalaya houses a large collection of clay pots used for milk boiling ceremonies.

Although located by the main road, the Devalaya preserves its own tranquil atmosphere, a silence that makes one oblivious to everything around and renders even the



The Kadawara Devalaya dedicated to the Kadawara Deviyo

jarring noise of a bus horn a distant sound. Lulled by the spiritual ambience of it all, only the abrupt sound of a coconut breaking against the cold stone stirs one back to reality from the mystical world of the Tannivelle Devalaya.



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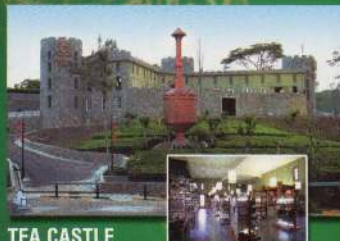
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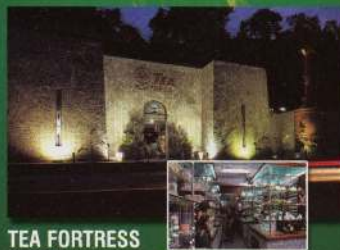
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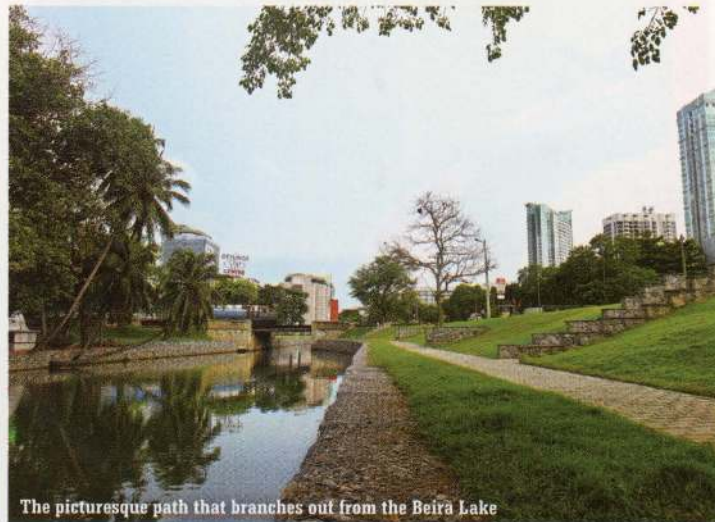
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OPEN YOUR EYES TO



Galle Face Green



The picturesque path that branches out from the Beira Lake



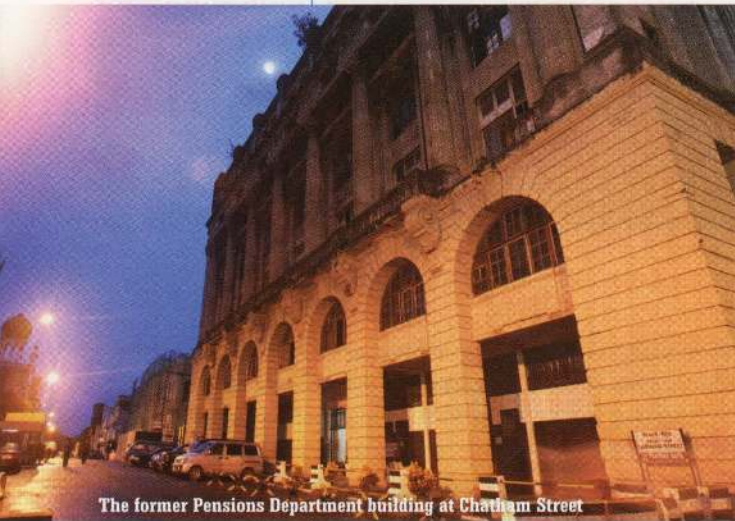
Independence Avenue



The National Performing Arts Theatre

COLOMBO

There was a time when the beauty of Colombo was hidden from the naked eye. We reminisce about the days when the city was green, the lakes were clear and the ornate architecture of the buildings could be appreciated.



The former Pensions Department building at Chatham Street



Spacious paving near the World Trade Centre



Diyawanna Oya



Galle Road

Venturing along the many roads of Colombo it is apparent that the days of old are back again and we no longer have to look back nostalgically. It is time to Open Your Eyes to Colombo!

Words: Udeshi Amarasinghe **Photographs:** Menaka Aravinda



The view of the Beira Lake from Perahera Mawatha

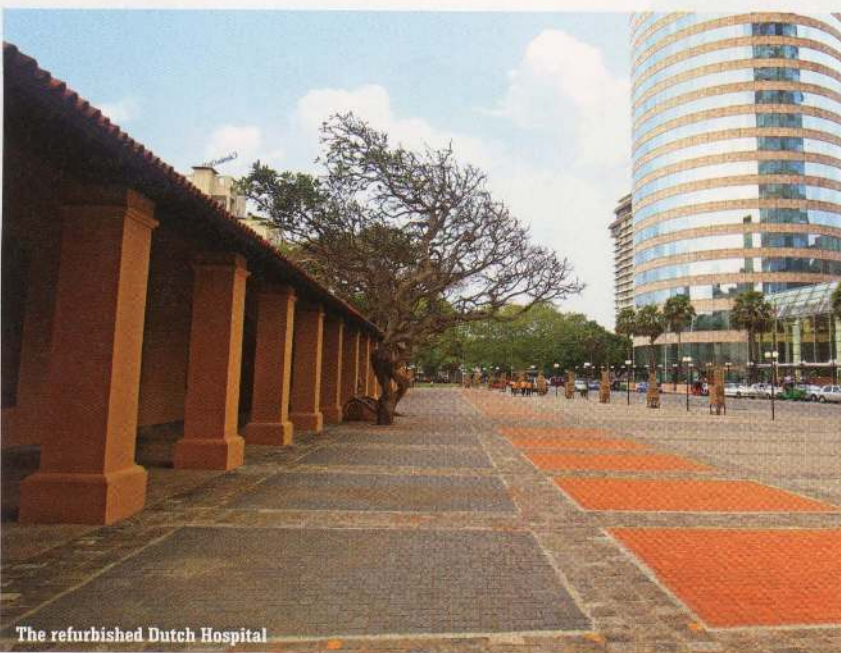
Suspended in Time...

Calm and quiet...well...that is how I felt as I walked along the foot-path that ran along the Beira Lake towards Sri Uttarananda Mawatha. The well manicured lawns and the green foliage of the surrounding trees provided the ideal location for an afternoon stroll. The sound of vehicles on the road was just a murmur in the background. A true sense of

freedom and peace could be felt amidst the hectic blur of city life.

Stone benches and sitting areas have been provided for those who wish to take a moment's respite. Suddenly it was as if the flood gates had been opened, a stream of people started walking out of their offices, many of them heading towards the Kompannaveediya train station. Over

the railway tracks they went hastening their steps to catch the train. A toot of horns was heard as two trains going in the opposite directions passed each other. For a moment I was suspended in time, indecisive whether to reflect on the past – I open my eyes – there was no need to, the beauty of Colombo was right in front of me.



The refurbished Dutch Hospital

Fort...

The Dutch Hospital, a remnant from our colonial past has shed its dilapidated look to emerge refreshed. Its characteristic architecture has been maintained with spacious interiors, massive doors, windows and arches. It blends perfectly with the more modern surroundings of the World Trade Centre. The wide pavements with street lamps and green plants have opened up the space. With the road opened from both sides there is a clear flow of energy.

We headed on to Olcott Mawatha, here too the pavements had been redone with street lamps adorning the sidewalks. With the



The tower at Janadhipathi Mawatha

facades of the buildings such as Millers and others from our colonial heritage visible to the naked eye it was truly enjoyable to appreciate the brilliant architecture.

Walking along the length of Janadhipathi Mawatha, the sky opened up with a drizzle of rain. The tower, which is said to be both a lighthouse and clock tower loomed

above with the Central Bank of Ceylon giving a stately appearance to the area. At the corner of Chatham Street and Janadhipathi Mawatha is a building with Roman style architecture. At one time this had been the Pensions Department. With renovation work happening around the area, this building too will relive its glory.

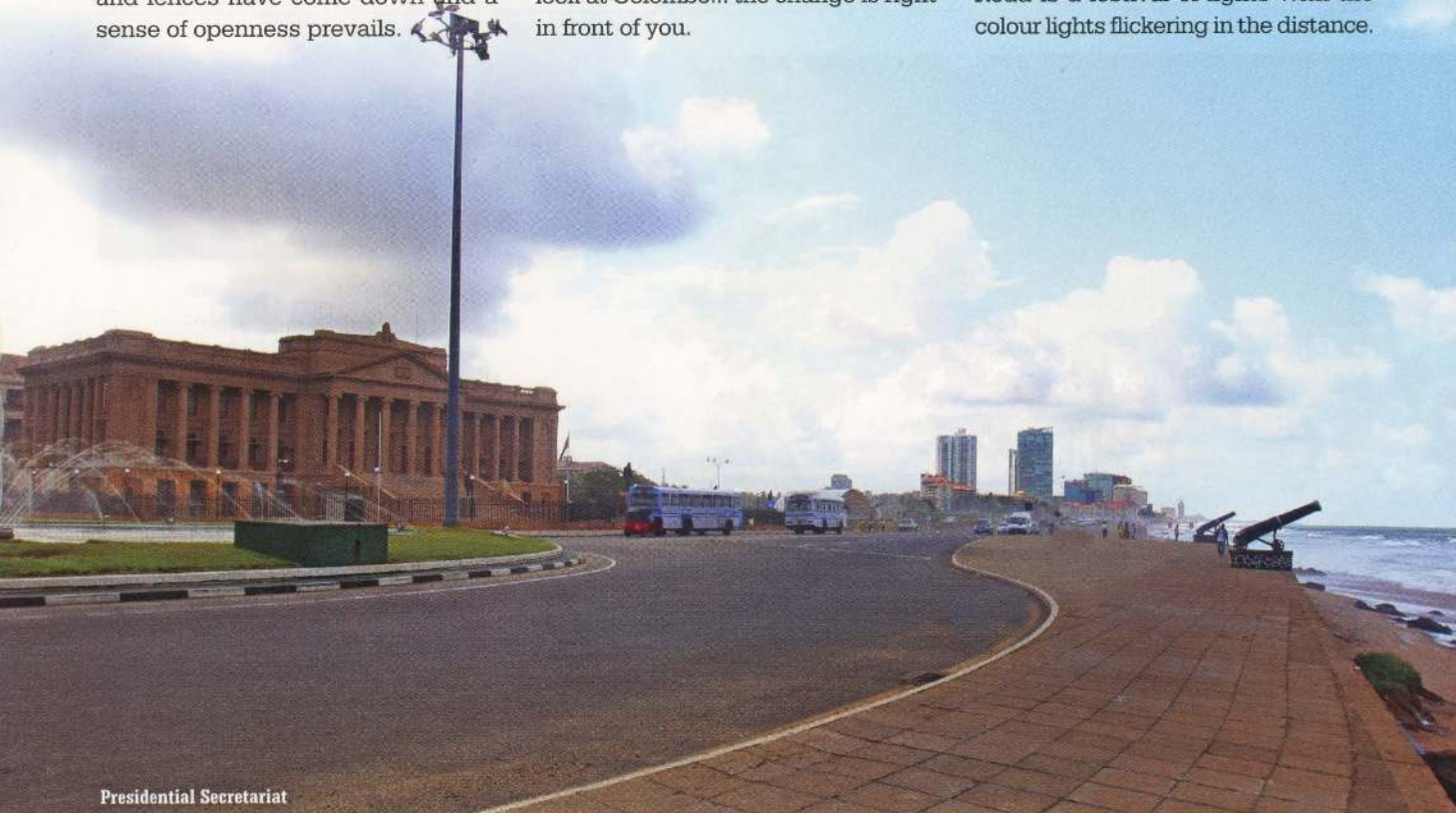
THE TOWER, WHICH IS SAID TO BE BOTH A LIGHTHOUSE AND CLOCK TOWER LOOMED ABOVE.

Galle Face...

The Galle Face Green is truly green... and is again a place for relaxation and leisure. Early morning joggers go about their daily routine, while those rushing off to work walk briskly along the pavement. Walls and fences have come down and a sense of openness prevails.

The Presidential Secretariat stands tall amidst the hype of modernity as a reminder of our regal past. Yet there is a present and a future merged with the past, unique in its persona, it just takes a moment to open your eyes and look at Colombo... the change is right in front of you.

Driving along the Galle Road, one would be able to see a clear transformation of this busy road, which is like the artery of Colombo with new pavements with green foliage and clear signboards. At night the Galle Road is a festival of lights with the colour lights flickering in the distance.



Presidential Secretariat



Police station Cinnamon Garden



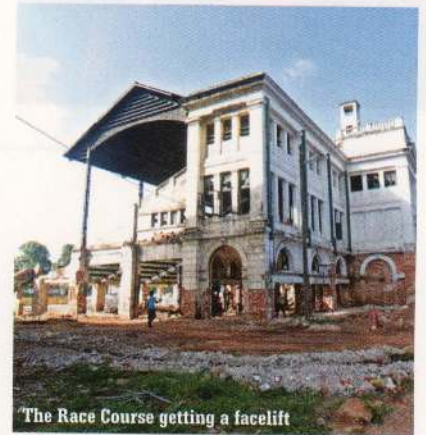
The walking tracks along Independence Avenue

Independence Avenue and its vicinity...

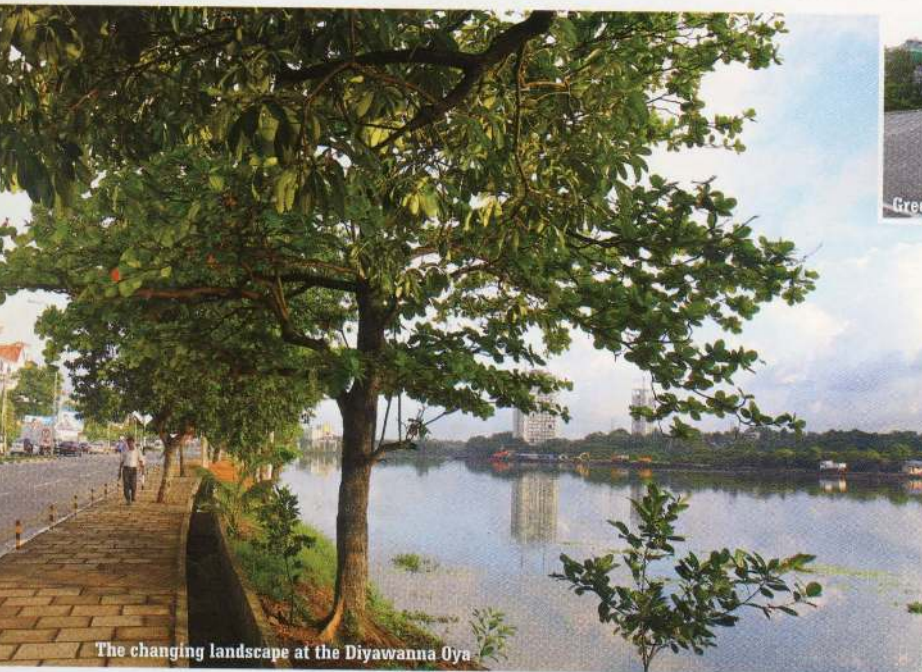
Independence Avenue is seeing a new look, the walls once covering the National Archives as well as the adjoining buildings have come down. Furthermore a walking path is currently being constructed for the daily fitness enthusiasts, from Independence Avenue along Reid Avenue, then turning inwards at the Race Course. The Race Course too is getting a facelift and as such its beautiful brick structure and intricate design is visible

as the reconstruction work progresses.

In the heart of Colombo a massive structure can be seen. Its exuberance dominates the somewhat laid back environment of the Vihara Maha Devi Park and other buildings in the vicinity. The National Performing Arts Theatre with has an auditorium with a capacity of 1288 is yet another symbol of modernity and progress – the new intermingling with the old – a confluence that makes Colombo what it is.



The Race Course getting a facelift



The changing landscape at the Diyawanna Oya



Green islands in the centre of the road

Diyawanna Oya...

In the outskirts of Colombo on the way to the Parliament at Sri Jayawardenapura, a transformation can be seen. The walking paths along the Diyawanna Oya have been laid while maintaining the greenery of its surroundings. With the traffic buzzing in the vicinity, it takes a while to realise that you are on a busy road. The roundabout and the islands in the middle of the road have been landscaped beautifully in line with the environment.

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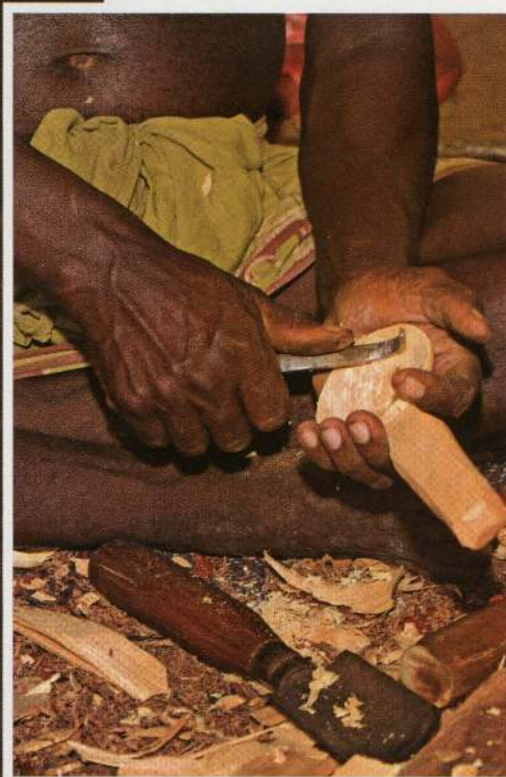
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Piece of wood taking the shape of a spoon

The woods were silent. The clay houses mimicked the silence and the quiet dignity of the woods. A sultry breeze lulled the heat of the day. The tap tapping of Heen Banda's hammer on a piece of wood broke the surrounding quiet at a rhythmic pace. The piece of wood slowly took the shape of an elephant, its trunk raised in a tense movement.

Artisans of Kotabakina

Words Chamindra Warusawitharane Photographs Prabath Chaturanga and Indika De Silva

Heen Banda is a member of Sri Lanka's Veddha community who according to many historians are Sri Lanka's original inhabitants. He is an artist who makes his living by carving various shapes on pieces of wood and cultivating a bit of Chena. Curious to see his art and listen to him talk about his work, we set upon a journey to Kotabakina, Dambana.


By the time we reached Kotabakina the sun had just risen above the trees and we were greeted by a group of men chatting under a cool corner behind a cluster of trees. On inquiring about Heen Banda we were told that we would first have to talk to 'Nayakathuma', current leader of the community. After a few pleasantries at the Nayakathuma's house we were introduced to Heen Banda.

Sitting on a mat in his compound surrounded by his tools and a few of his artefacts Heen Banda started his narration. He started out by whittling wood as a kid and to this day he continues to do so. Wild elephants, leopards, deer and hunters with bows and arrows are his

subject matters. We spotted two identical jet-black spear shaped curios on the mat. Heen Banda told us the spears represent 'Kalubandara Deviyo's' jewels and many request those as they are considered harbingers of good luck. 'Kalubandara Deviyo' is a revered benevolent ancestral spirit of the Veddha people. Sans the more complicated patterns and details, Heen Banda's art depicts the minimalistic charm of his own way of life. Nevertheless, all his miniature animals and men seem to bear unique characteristics. The half finished elephant appeared a little tense with its trunk raised in protest. The huntsman with his bows and arrows seemed to be lost in deep thought.

Heen Banda is not the only artist in his village. He told us about Seethavanniya who makes his own wood carving tools. After bidding a friendly goodbye to Heen Banda we wended our way towards Seethavanniya's house and workstation.

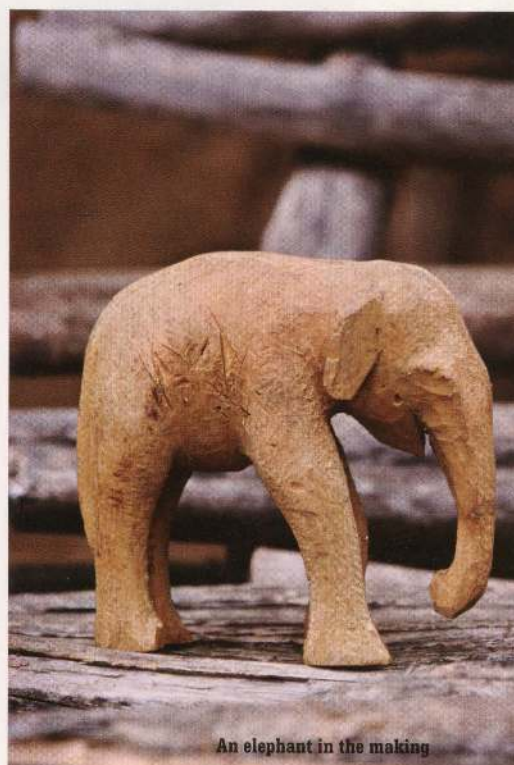
On our way we bumped into Vanni who was carving a yet another



SANS THE MORE COMPLICATED PATTERNS AND DETAILS, HEEN BANDA'S ART DEPICTS THE MINIMALISTIC CHARM OF HIS OWN WAY OF LIFE.



Carving a miniature elephant



An elephant in the making

PIECES OF DRY
KALUWARA,
BURUTHA, SERU
AND GAMMALU
TIMBER FROM
THE NEARBY
WOODS TAKE
THESE VARIOUS
SHAPES ...



wood mortars



A hunter with a bow and arrow



Heen Banda at work



A souvenir



A half finished human figure

miniature elephant. Vanni proved to be less talkative than Heen Banda.

Seethavanniya is a middle-aged man and we caught him hammering away at a piece of 'seru' wood. Apart from animal and human figures Seethavanniya carves small wooden mortars, pestles and spoons. Pieces of dry Kaluwara, Burutha, Seru and Gammalu timber from the nearby woods take these various shapes in his hands. As none of the three men use paint the artefacts retain the original colours of the timber.

All three men sell their artefacts to both local and foreign tourists. They usually carve artefacts on

whim but sometimes they even get orders for specific pieces. Seethavanniya introduced us to his friend who works as a go between and a salesman between him and his buyers.

A man adroit in multi-tasking, Seethavanniya kept on shaping his piece of 'seru' wood while chatting to us amicably. As we watched in admiration the piece of wood became a quaint spoon within half an hour in Seethavanniya's deft hands. He kept on tapping and shaving the spoon adding finer touches to it. The breeze blew around him making the creamy wood shavings flutter and his hammer continued its even rhythm.

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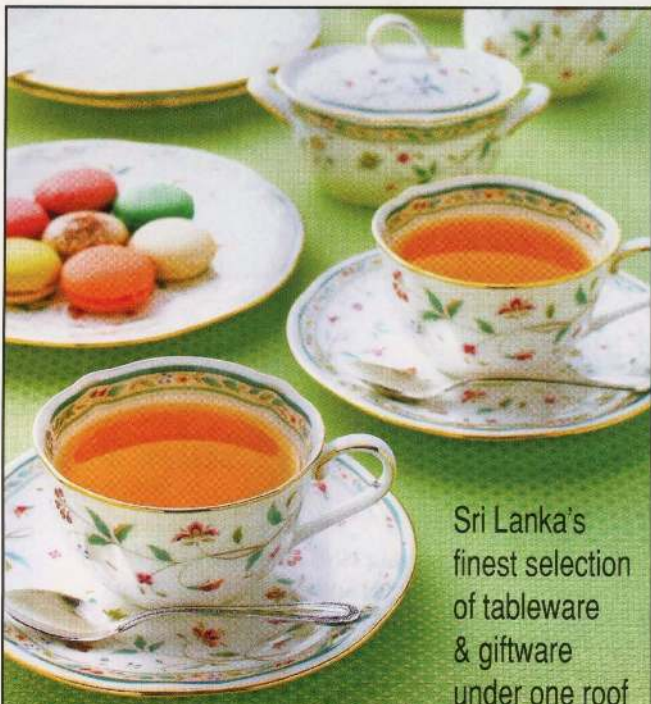
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Nihal Fernando

Capturing the persona of Sri Lanka

One of the country's foremost photographers, Nihal Fernando, has combined a true artistic gift with a passion for conservation of Sri Lanka's heritage and natural resources. The resulting photographs have both inspired and challenged his audience to action.

Words Manori Wijesekera

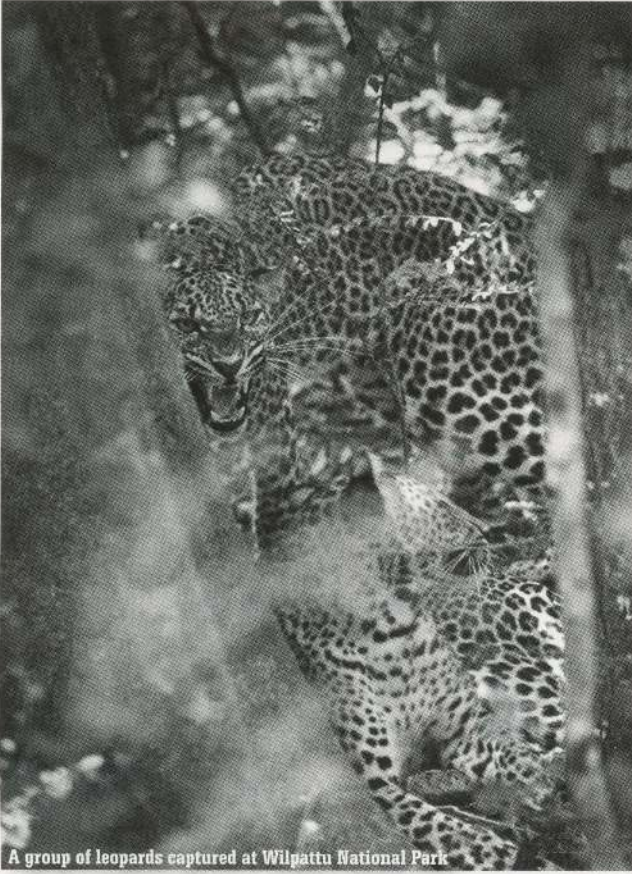
Nihal Fernando's love of photography started early, when he was still in school and took group photos of his friends with a borrowed camera. He ventured into professional photography as a news photographer in the 1940s for the Times of Ceylon. The Observer Pictorial and the Times Annual, collector's items for its stunning photography and creative writing, soon began carrying his work. When his employer, the Times Group, decided to close down Studio Times in 1963, he decided to

purchase it and move out on his own. The journey he embarked on from that time onwards, is one which has captured the remarkable beauty and vulnerability of this island nation.

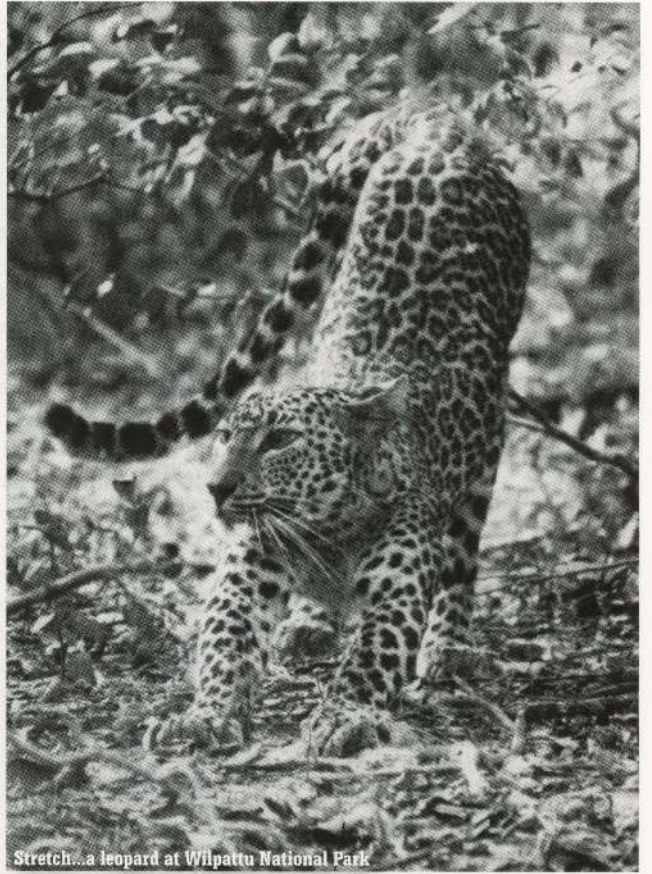
Fernando is perhaps best known for his photography of the natural world. The painstaking hours of watching and waiting, the research and the resulting search for some species which required you to go deeper and deeper into the jungle – these were all the norm for Fernando. The photographs of elephants, leopards and other

mammals captured the imagination of those of us who couldn't venture into the jungles with him. He paid equally close attention to the flora – the giant trees, the shrub and the rainforest plants, the wildflowers and the ferns, all of these received the same meticulous attention as his loving portrayals of wildlife.

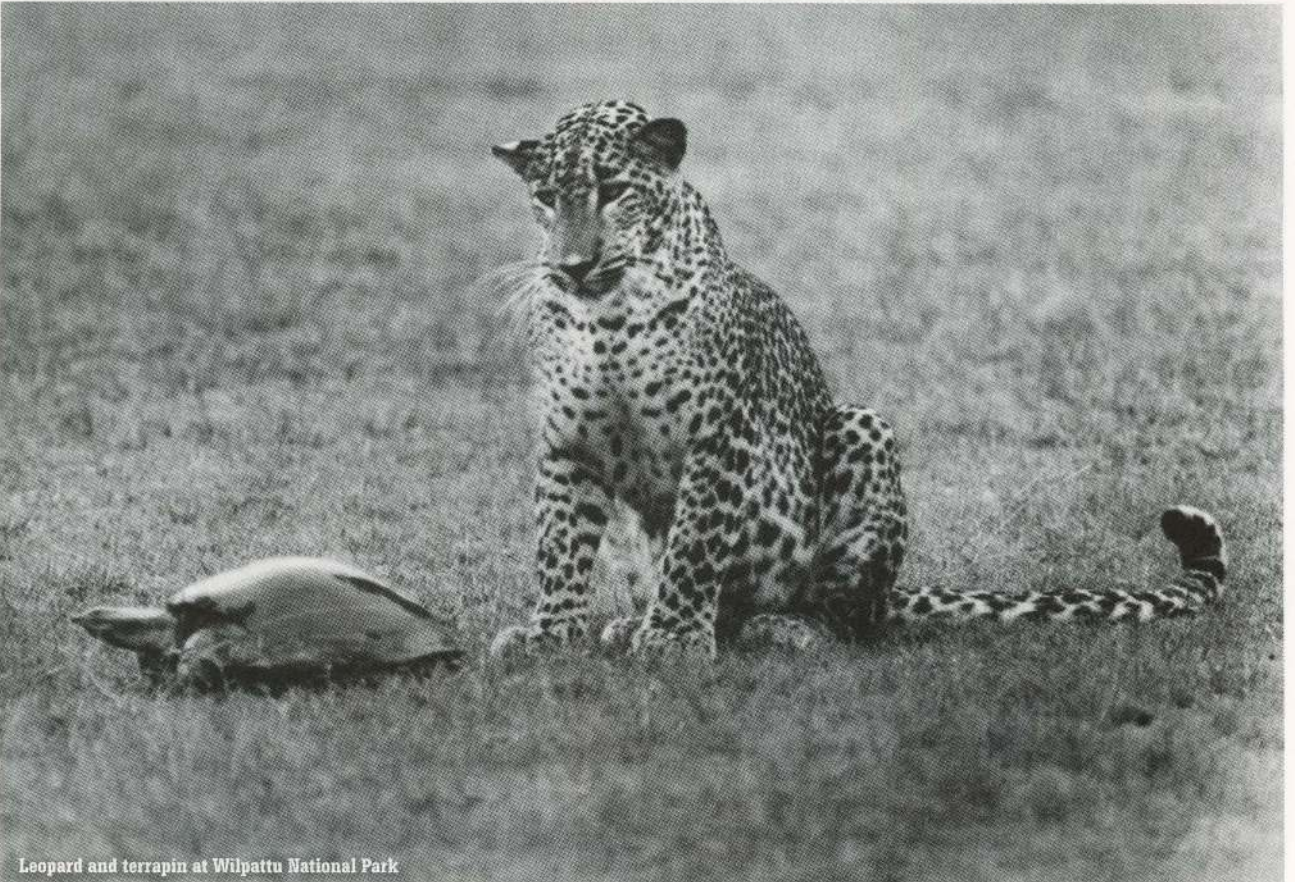
The panoramic beauty of the Sri Lankan landscape, whether it be fishermen at work along a pristine coastline or the canopy of rainforest, covered in a shroud of mist, Fernando captured each



A group of leopards captured at Wilpattu National Park



Stretch...a leopard at Wilpattu National Park



Leopard and terrapin at Wilpattu National Park

The remarkable ability which Fernando has, to create an evocative moment through a photograph, is one which he used unashamedly to promote his island home.

breathtaking vista with beautiful framing and composition. Some photographs look like paintings, others almost ethereal.

Sifting through a part of his collection, it appears that he wanted to capture every facet and nuance of Sri Lanka. Portraits of the Sri Lankan people, their everyday lives, the shy smiles of children – all these are captured with empathy through his lens. The Northern Province was one he could not cover as extensively as other parts of the country, due to the military conflict at the time. But his pre-conflict photographs of the grandeur of the buildings and warmth of the people in the North makes you stop and gaze in sadness – the knowledge that their lives would be drastically changed a few years after these carefree photographs were taken, a hard reality to swallow.

The remarkable ability which Fernando has, to create an evocative

moment through a photograph, is one which he used unashamedly to promote his island home. Born in the west coast town of Marawila, in a house by the sea, Fernando's family moved to Colombo when he was six years old. But the deep love of the natural environment and a sense of the historical heritage we call our own, never left him.

A large part of his collection consists of black and white photographs, and Studio Times was soon recognised as the pre-eminent place for commercial processing of black and white photographs. Although he moved into colour photography and then to digital cameras, some of his best work remains in the black and white sphere. Studio Times has presented 18 exhibitions, featuring Fernando's work as well as others at the Studio, such as Pat Decker, Luxshmanan Nadaraja and Christopher Silva.



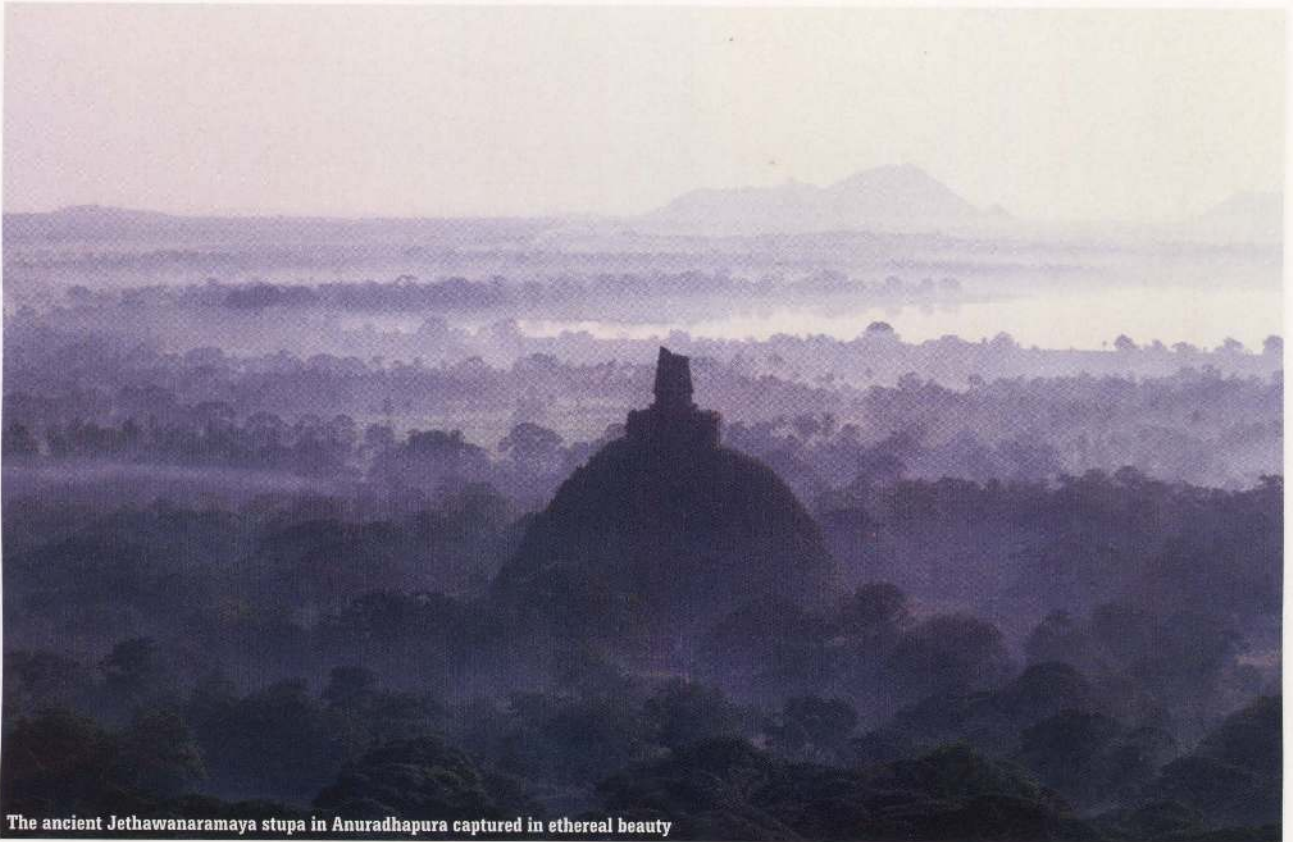
The smiling faces of village children



A silhouette of Medirigiriya captured at dawn



Anuradhapura



The ancient Jethawanaramaya stupa in Anuradhapura captured in ethereal beauty

Nihal Fernando's photographs not only speaks to us of Sri Lanka's intrinsic beauty, but also challenges us to consider the values and lifestyles we pursue and how it could forever erase this fragile beauty.

The publications of Nihal Fernando are varied and provide a glimpse into this man of many parts; from a much acclaimed "Handbook for the Ceylon Farmer" published in 1965 extolling the merits of sustainable and organic farming methods, to "The Handbook for the Ceylon Traveller" which was a precursor to today's travel book, with facts, information and beautiful photographs to help you discover this island better. Among his other publications, now considered collectors' prized items, are *The Wild The Free The Beautiful*, *Serendip to Sri Lanka: Immemorial Isle*, *Sri Lanka: A Personal Odyssey*, *With The Dawn* and his last publication, *Eloquence in Stone: the Lithic Saga of Sri Lanka*.

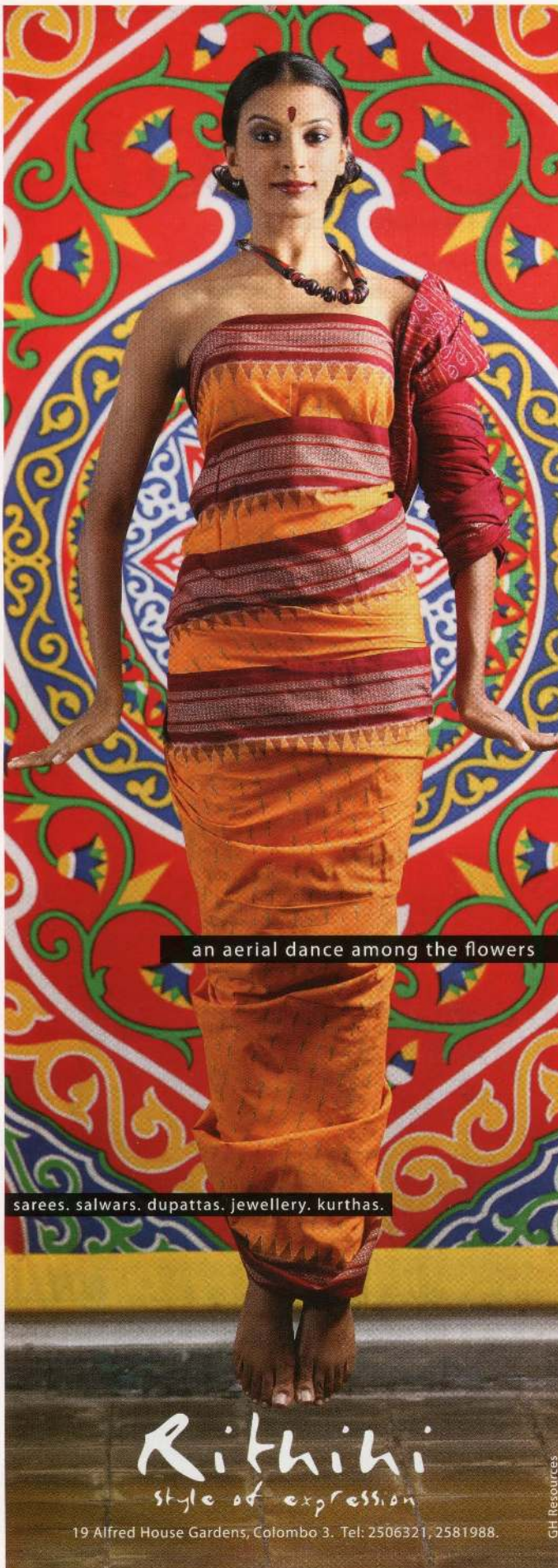
The one quality that separated him from his peers, that raised him

above the milieu of artistes, was his ability to transform his passion into action. He was a founder member of the Environmental Foundation and Ruk Rekaganno, as well as a former member of the Fauna & Flora Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Environment. He has worked passionately and actively to protect the natural resources of this country, against exploitation and advocating conservation. He instigated the movement that resulted in the opposition to the open-cast mining at Eppawela by a multi-national company, was involved in the campaign against the state-sanctioned logging in Sinharaja forest, worked to stop the water reforms bill and was ardently involved in many other campaigns. Each of these campaigns was successful, as they were based

on meticulous research and had garnered support from all affected people.

Although now in retirement, Fernando's legacy lives on through his daughter Anu Weerasuriya who now manages Studio Times. Through his photographs, Nihal Fernando revealed to both Sri Lanka and the world, the hidden facets of this country. From never before seen historical artefacts, to the vulnerability of our wildlife, the splendour of our natural landscape, and the generosity and warmth of our people, Nihal Fernando's photographs not only speak to us of Sri Lanka's intrinsic beauty, but also challenge us to consider the values and lifestyles we pursue and how it could forever erase this fragile beauty.





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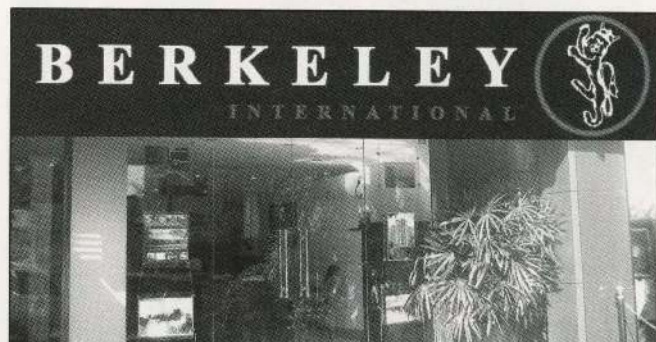
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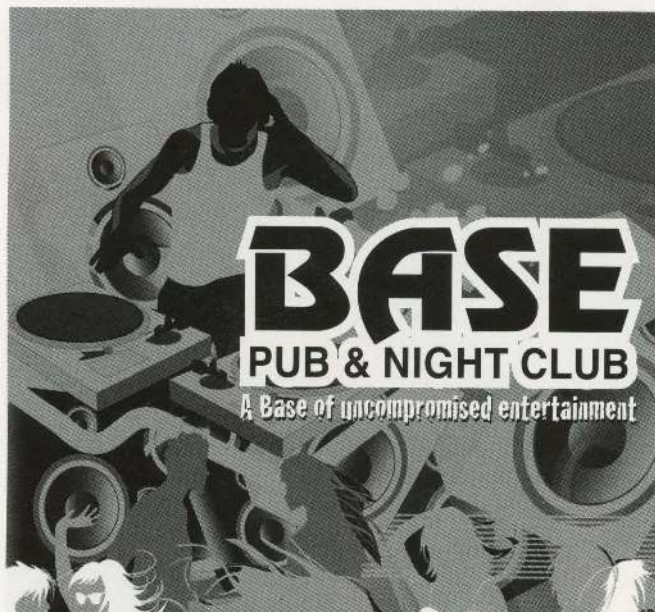
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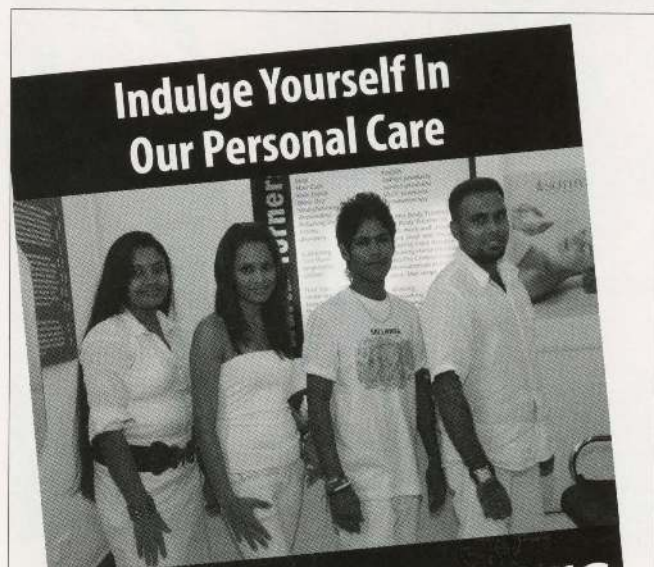


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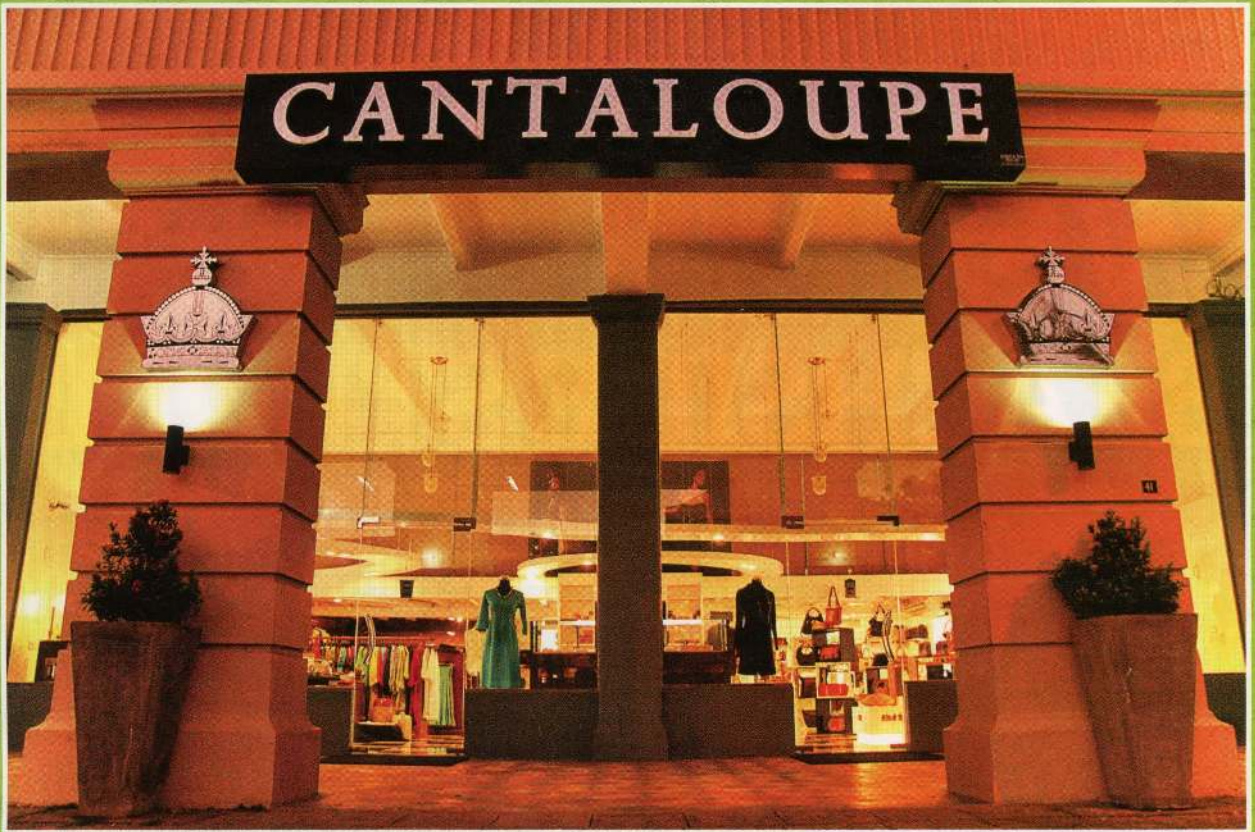
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Wellawatte, 'Wella' meaning 'sea sand' and 'Watte' meaning 'garden', has a getaway back door from its bustling city work and living, into a wonderland of oceanic charm. We sometimes travel long distances to find peace of mind from our mundane lives; yet, right here lies a quick fix – a bit of sand and sea that sets you free...

Words Sonali Kadurugamuwa

Photographs Prabath Chaturanga and Indika De Silva

Silhouette of people making memories



We had always known it was there, on the other side, close to where we spend most of our time... our work places. If we listen as well as we should, we can hear it and at times see its grayish blue gaze beam through meager gaps of thick concrete jungle that wall the city's edge. Wellawatte is mostly a working city, every nook and cranny overflows with diverse activity, offices over here, restaurants and fast food

stalls over there, bargain shopping, cinemas, houses and apartments in between. But that's not all...

Dodging traffic and even zig-zagging our way through hordes of other pedestrians we eagerly headed towards Marine Drive — a main road running parallel to the Galle Road, just beyond the hurdle of buildings, alongside the railway tracks of the Bambalapitya and Wellawatte stations. The tracks sat atop a short bund and from Marine Drive the level

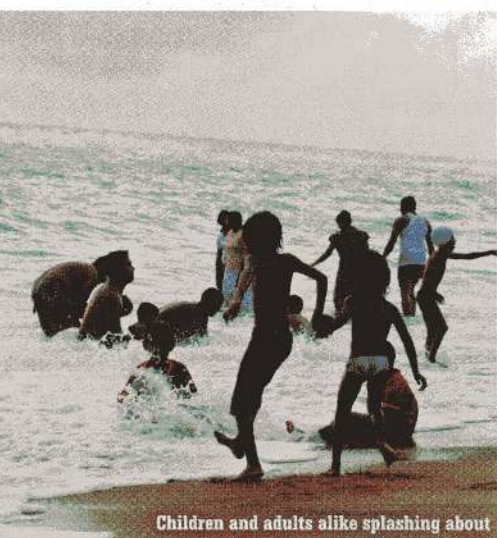
of the sea, just beyond it, seemed to meet at the same height, with no intermission. It was only after we walked the incline crossing over the railway tracks, that we saw the long strip of beach fringing the ocean. After work, before the evening dusk turned dark, we had made our way into a haven, where the breeze never ceased, but only got stronger and we literally let our hair down, let the spray of ocean and soft beach sand leisurely cure a stressful day.



A spot of sea fishing



People taking a load off at the beach



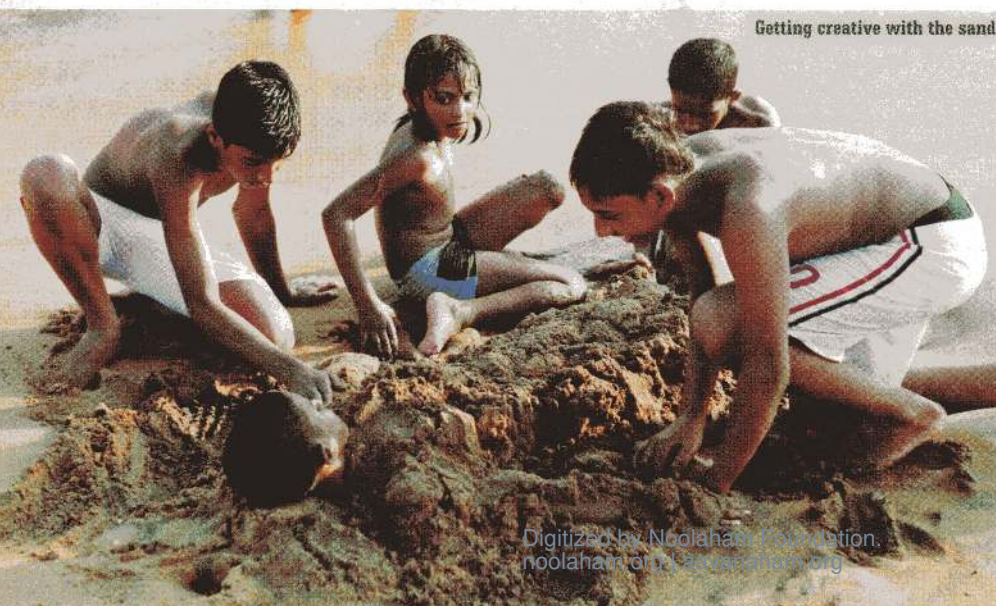
Children and adults alike splashing about

Mount Lavinia beach hung vaguely in the distance at one end of the shoreline, the Colombo Harbour at the other. The twin towers of the World Trade Centre, although farther inland seemed closer to the ocean than met the eye, with what appeared to be a brush stroke of sea spray edging towards it. The sea before us danced; with swelling highs and lows... we were transfixed in its grace until it splashed our clothes with a salty yet sweet awakening, making us giddy with amusement.

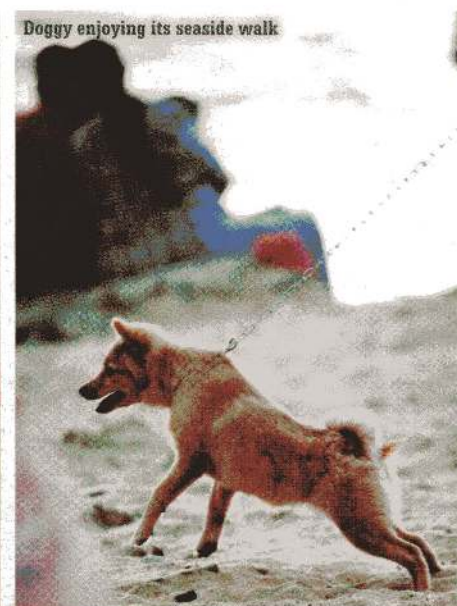
Children, some cautious of the thick foam approaching their curious feet, ran away in mix of happy yet

frightened hysteria, others were sent rolling up to shore along with the playful tide. Families, new loves, people walking their dogs and even anglers, were all participants of their own recreational activities by the seaside. A few daring souls swam farther into the ocean to inspect what seemed like a wreck, in the distance. However, we felt quite comfortable being at one with sea on its shore... although beautiful, the Indian Ocean can be unpredictable, all the same.

The beach sands were white and transitioned into a dull gold when ocean waves came onto shore.



Getting creative with the sand



Doggy enjoying its seaside walk



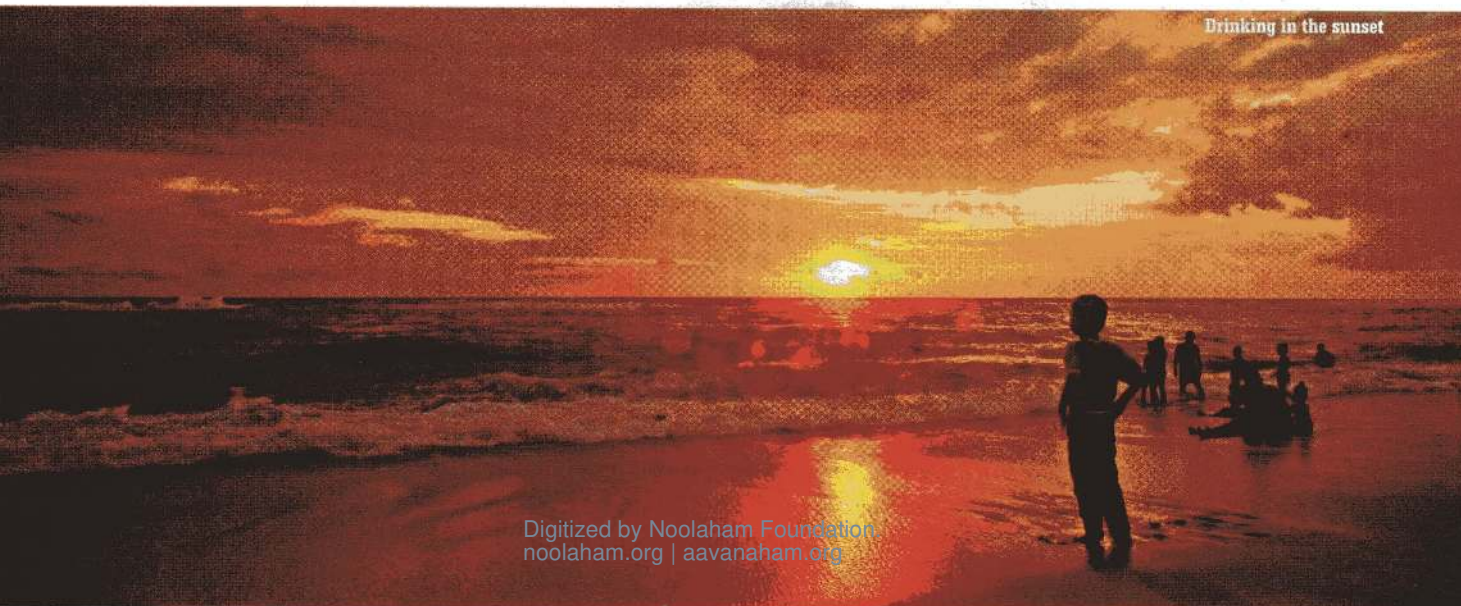
Mt. Lavinia - as far as the eye can see

Families, new loves,
people walking their
dogs and even anglers,
were all participants of
their own recreational
activities by the seaside.

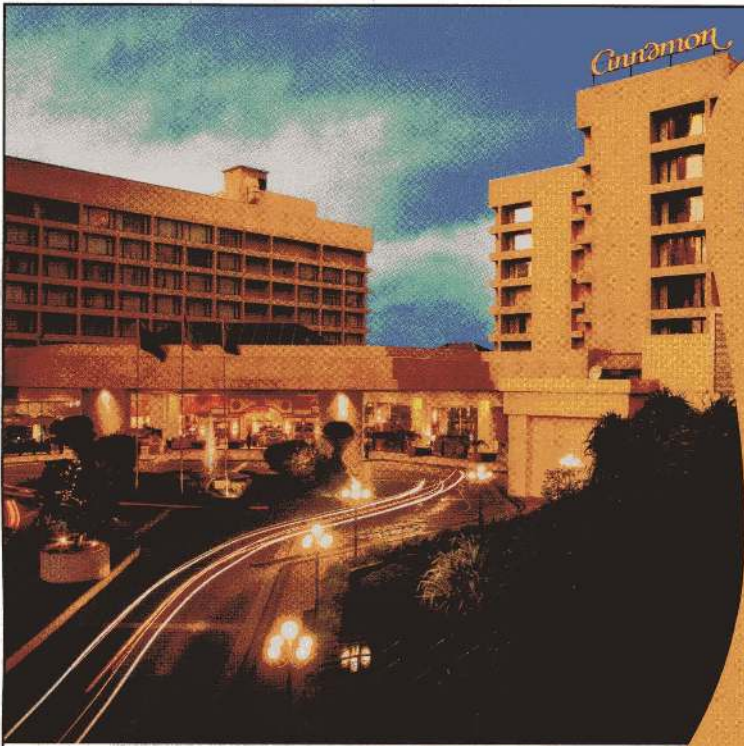
The footprints on them multiplied as more crowds kept pouring in and suddenly we were among many others who were here to make use of this tidal bliss and the sands that soothed the senses. We heard the numerous toots of train whistles at their busy stations, collecting and taking home, who may have been those regular commuters who are known to come from as far south as Matara to work in Colombo. The trains went chugging along their way full to the brim with passengers that squeezed through whatever crevices they could find between their fellow travellers to watch the

coming of the sunset. We, on the other hand, had a front row seat — on the sand!

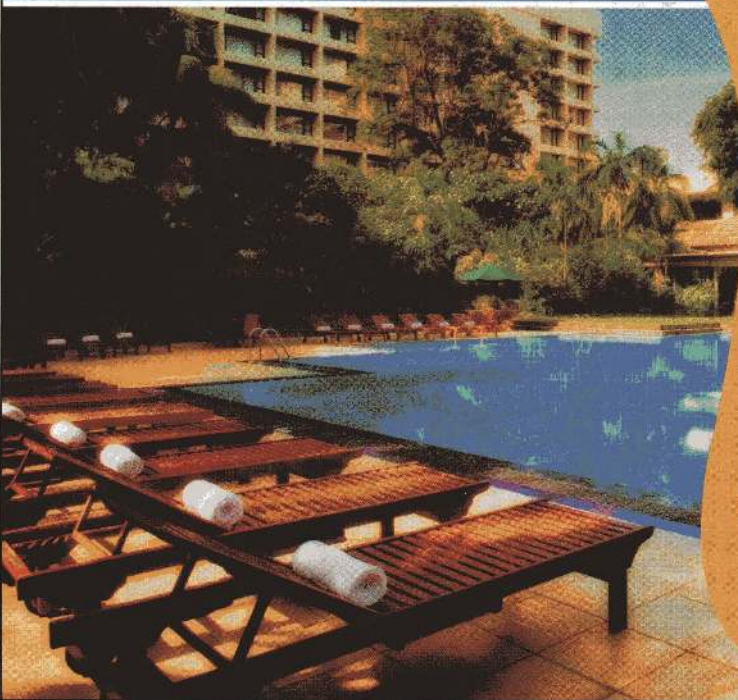
Sundown closed in and although we hadn't realised it earlier, each and every one of us was using this time as an escape not only to wash our heads off of our programmed lives, but we were also here to add to or even change our everyday lifestyles. Watching the sunset by the city of Wellawatte, we became conscious of the fact that this place, just a few minutes from the city, was not to be taken for granted. Its preservation needs to be fostered, if we are to keep coming back. ❏



Drinking in the sunset



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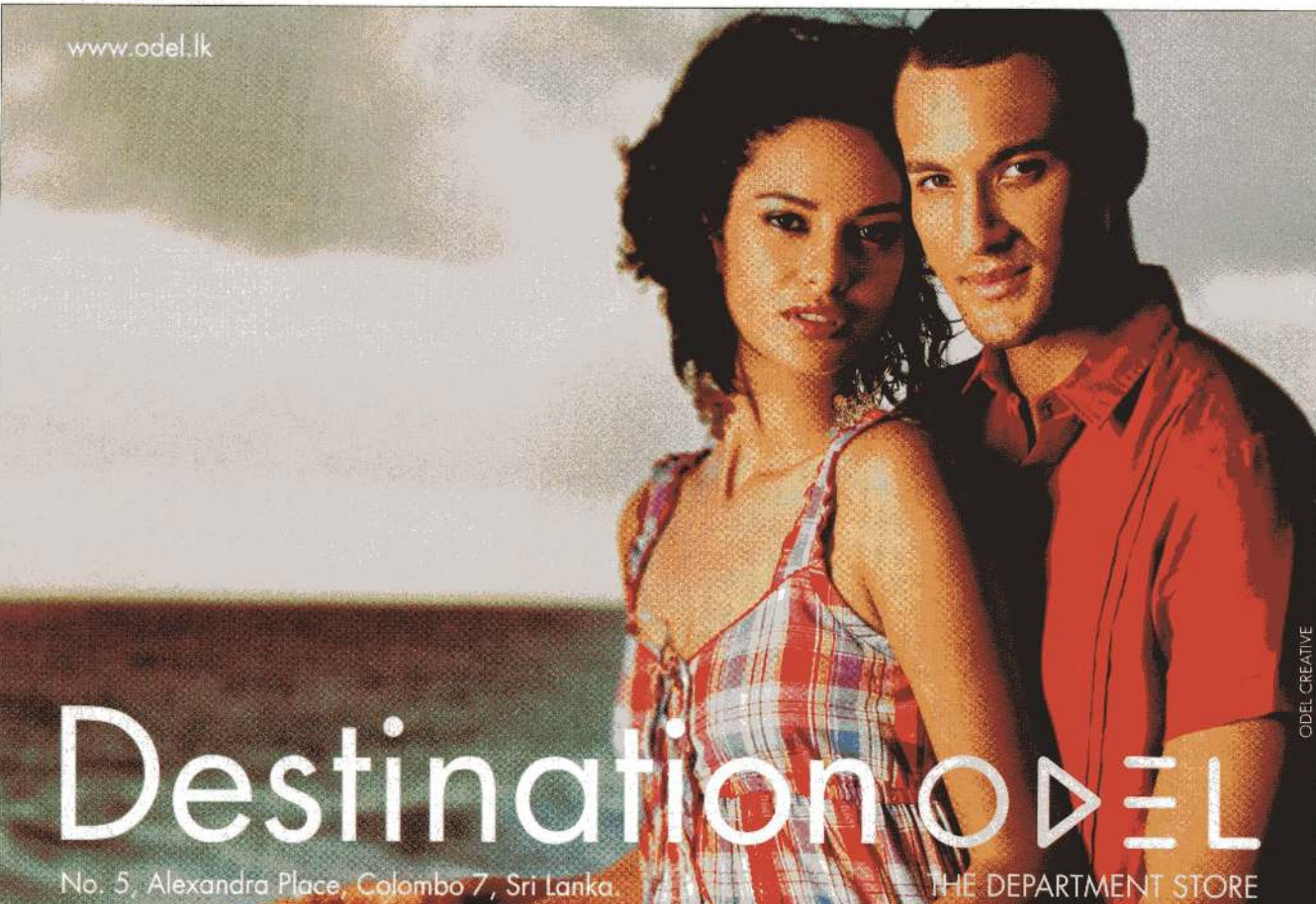


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The forty elephant calves under care have already begun to taste the sweet sense of liberty. The two youngest calves are still constantly under the watchful eye of their human guardians. Once they are

strong enough the two calves will join the rest in their rambles.

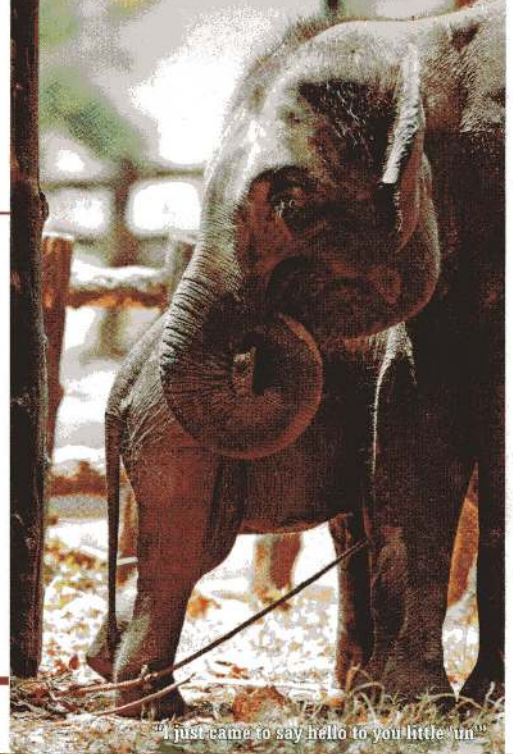
We reached Udawalawe just in time to catch the 12 o'clock feeding hour. Initially, except for a distant grey form or two and the tiny elephant tied to a pole, there were no elephants visible. We waited with the same impatience that the tiny elephant displayed for the arrival of the other calves. We waited mimicking the silence of the jungle. Soon afterwards two calves that appeared to be friends but with vastly different personalities – one mischievous and

eager the other dignified and aloof – walked in and greeted the delighted tiny baby elephant. In an instant baby elephants of various sizes, displaying numerous personality traits, assembled in the feeding area. We watched from behind an iron fence, the imperious trumpeting, comical collisions, independent far away gazes, majestic ramblings and the evident camaraderie. But we were glad to note, all baby elephants were essentially part of the elephant herd and treated humans with respectful detachment.

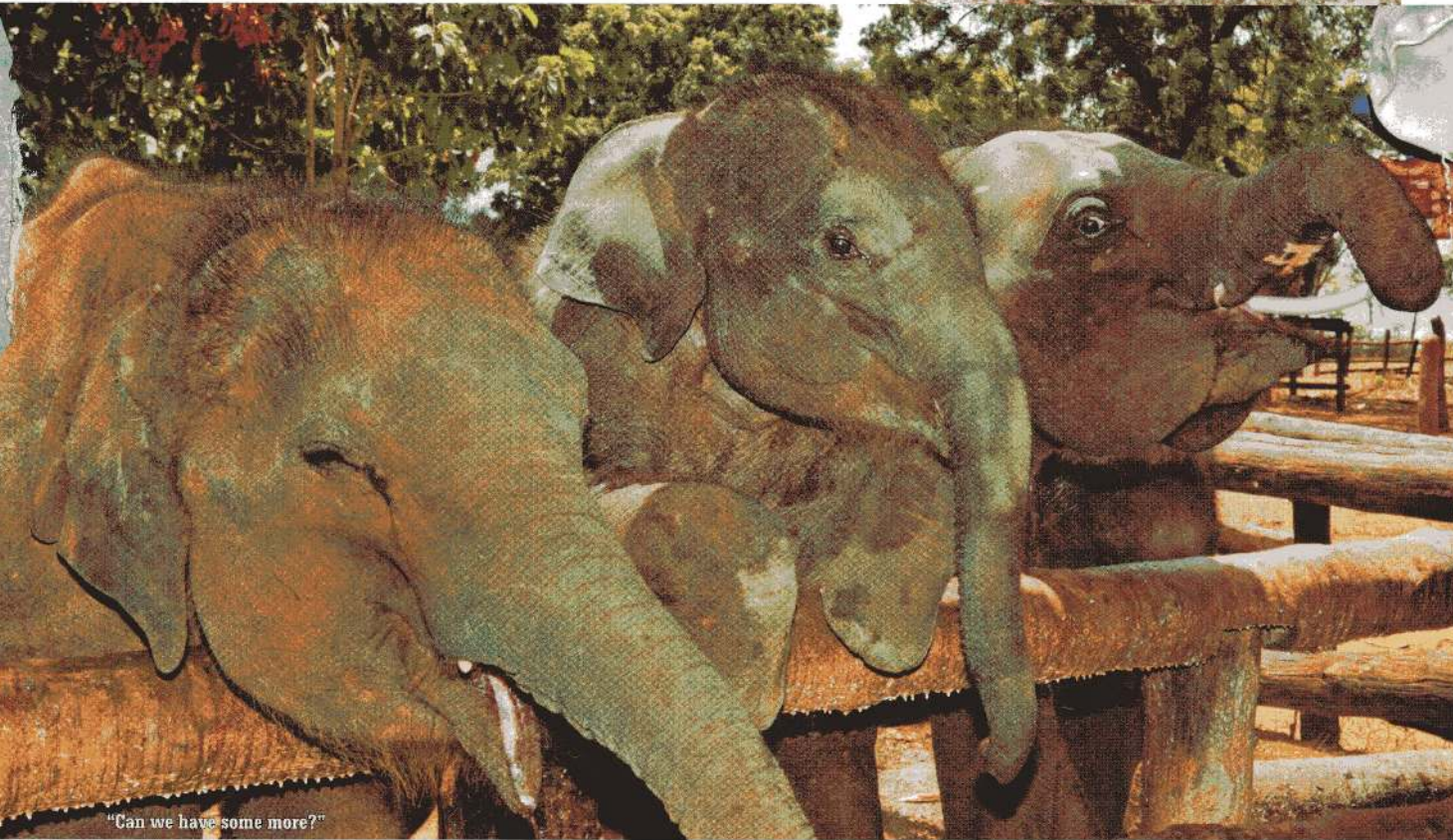


WE WATCHED FROM BEHIND AN IRON FENCE, THE IMPERIOUS TRUMPETING, COMICAL COLLISIONS, INDEPENDENT FAR AWAY GAZES, MAJESTIC RAMBLINGS AND THE EVIDENT CAMARADERIE.

Begun in the year 1995 Ath Athuru Sevena: Elephant Transit Home (ETH) has since then functioned as a welfare and a conservation centre for orphaned elephant calves. Remaining faithful to the original concept the ETH rehabilitates orphaned and injured elephant calves until they are ready to survive alone in the wild. The Wildlife Conservation Department of Sri Lanka is the responsible body for the Elephant Transit Home and its baby elephants. The ETH has a foster parent scheme for those who want to help the baby elephants. An individual or a group willing to support the elephant calves can adopt a calf and give financial support. The money will be used for buying milk powder and necessary medicine for the baby elephant.



"I just came to say hello to you little 'un"



"Can we have some more?"

Whilst the smallest of the calves are fed every two hours, the others make their way towards the feeding area every three hours exactly at the appointed feeding time. We were amazed to hear that the calves have a great sense of time and they all gather at the feeding area right on time several times a day.

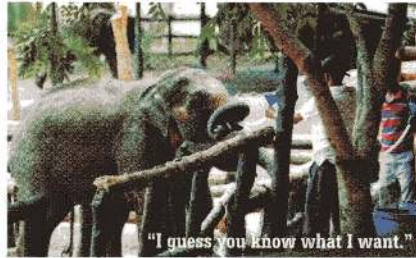
It was an incredible spectacle; an ETH employee sent in the babies in twos or threes at a time to be fed and once inside they behaved like a bunch of kindergarteners set loose. Most calves wanted more than their fair share of milk. Once they had their fill, some tried to nonchalantly walk back for more while others stood their

ground and rebelliously demanded more. However, several men with sticks guarded the mischievous ones. At first we wondered at the men's ability to identify each calf in the same manner they would identify a fellow human being. But after watching this lot for a while even we were able to tell them apart. Each

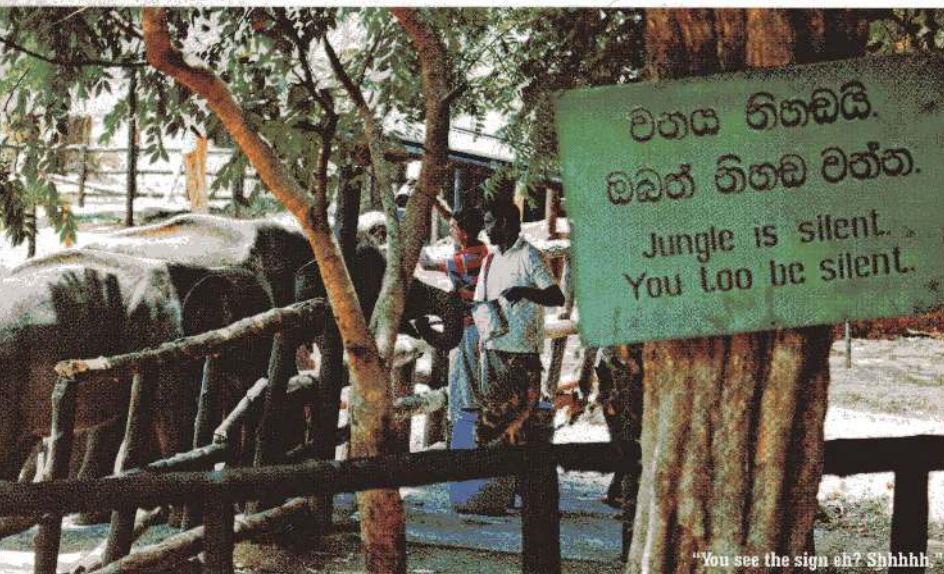


"Oh yum!"

MOST CALVES WANTED MORE THAN THEIR FAIR SHARE OF MILK. ONCE THEY HAD THEIR FILL, SOME TRIED TO NONCHALANTLY WALK BACK FOR MORE WHILE OTHERS STOOD THEIR GROUND AND REBELLIOUSLY DEMANDED MORE.



"I guess you know what I want."



"You see the sign eh? Shhhhh."



"So, how was your wait?"

calf has its own personality and even physical characteristics differ.

These very differences play a major role when it comes to forming or integrating into elephant herds. We were told that even at this young age the elephants form their own groups and some display inborn leadership skills and maternal instincts while others exhibit a decided aversion to younger calves. "When we release elephants we take into consideration the already formed groups", Dr Vijitha Perera, Veterinarian in charge of ETH affirmed.

The calves spend four years at the transit home gaining strength,

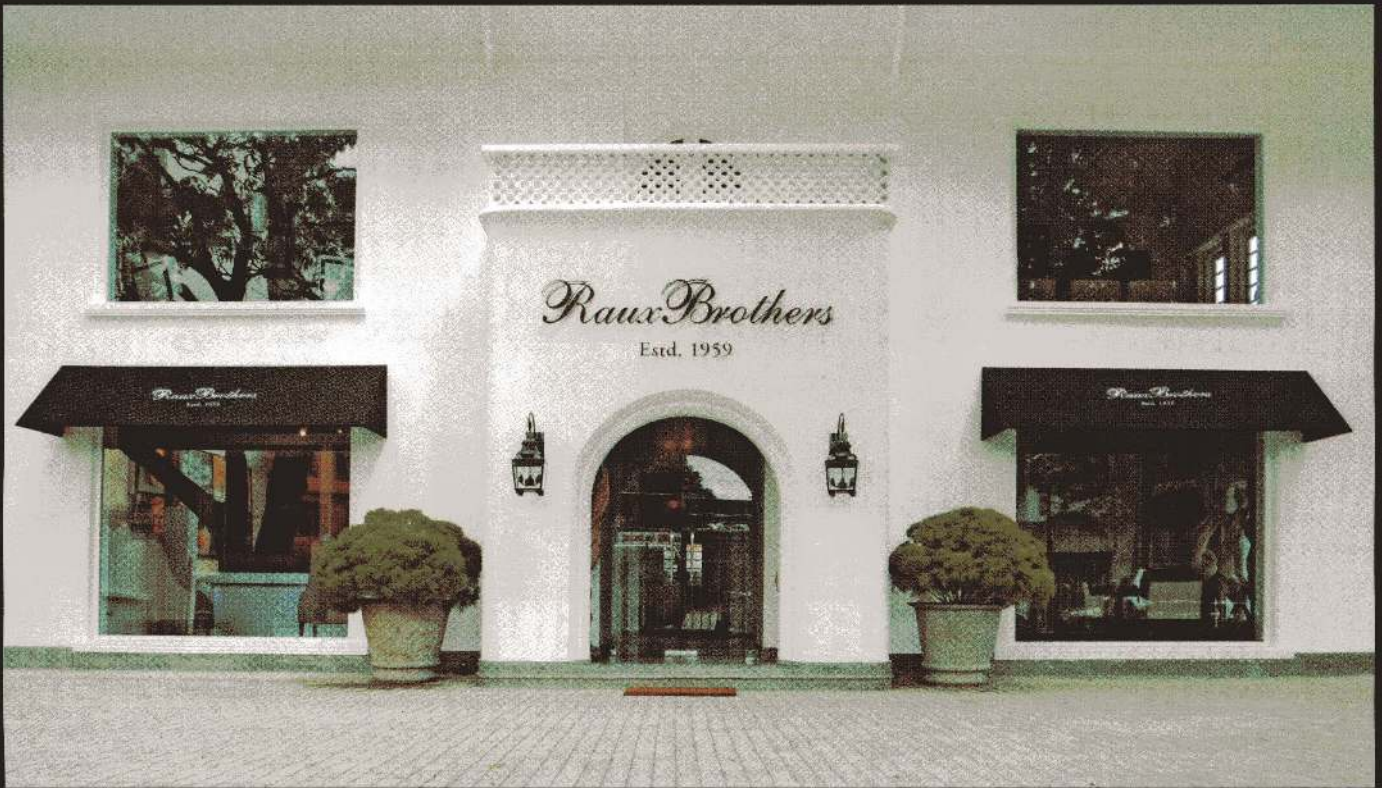
learning to bond and acquiring skills, in a nutshell gearing up for the challenges of the wide wide wilderness. In their mission to help these elephants to adjust to an independent life in the wild, ETH employees try to minimise human contact with the calves.

So far, the ETH has released seventy elephants and most of the released elephants continue to thrive in their natural habitat. Some of the transit home's former dwellers are now proud mothers themselves wandering free with their own offspring in tow. ETH monitors the elephants with radio collars that are fitted before releasing them. "Even after the

batteries die, we are able to keep track of the elephants as we know most of them by sight and are familiar with their respective herds", Dr Vijitha Perera said.

As the frenzy of the feeding time died down, the trumpeting stopped and an unusual calm descended on the baby elephants. They started to walk towards the glistening waters of the Udawalawe Reservoir and the vast stretches of grass and shrubs, in a united mass strong and free.

For more information: Elephant Transit Home, Department of Wildlife Conservation, Udawalawe Tel: (+94 47) 223 2144

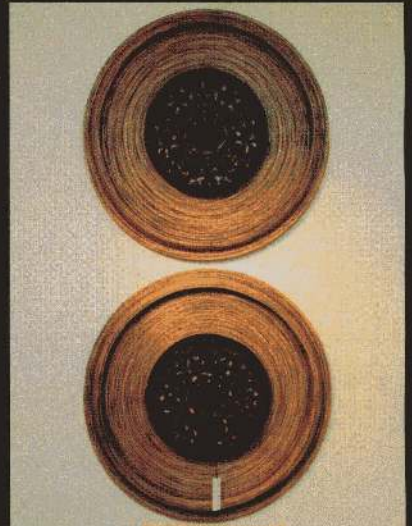


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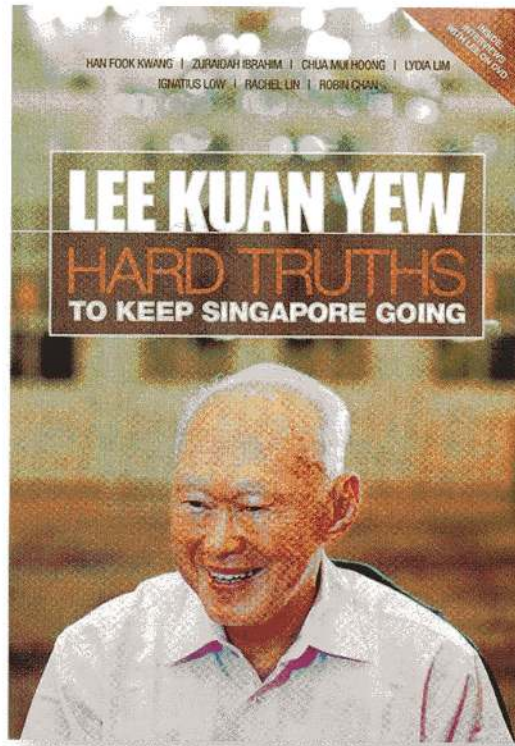
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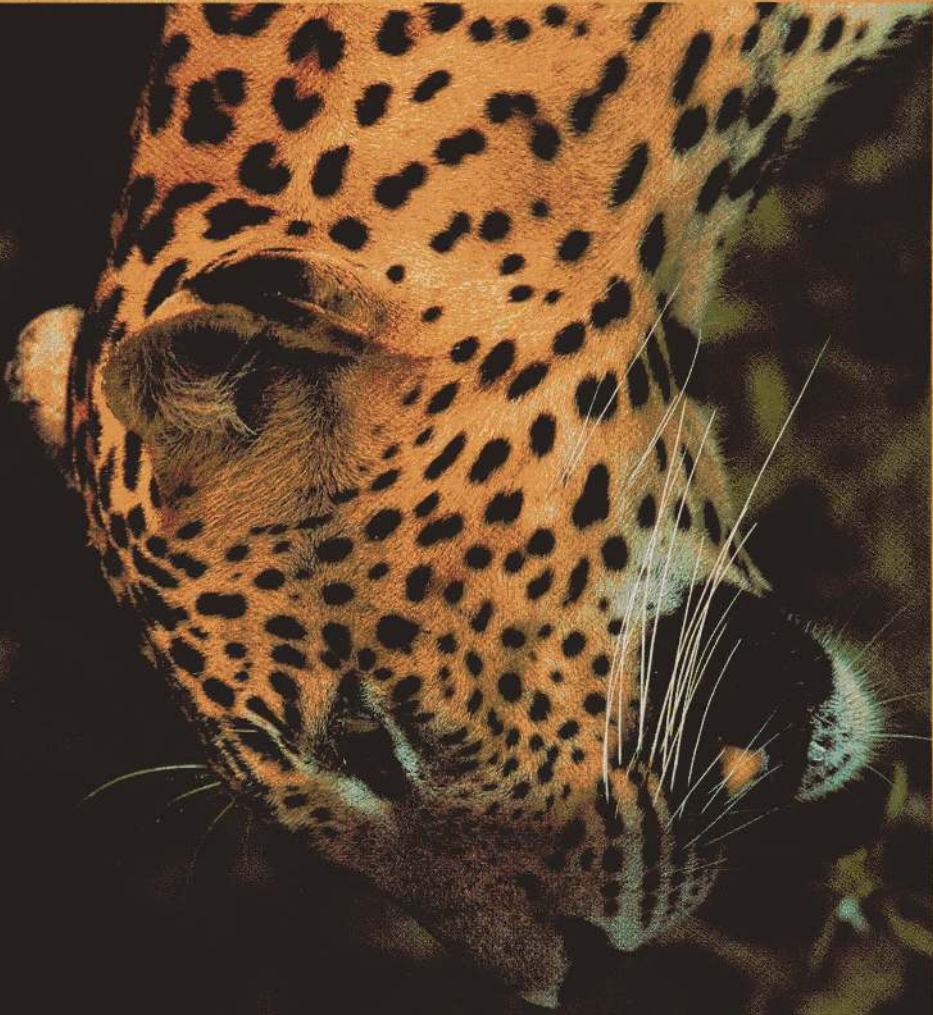
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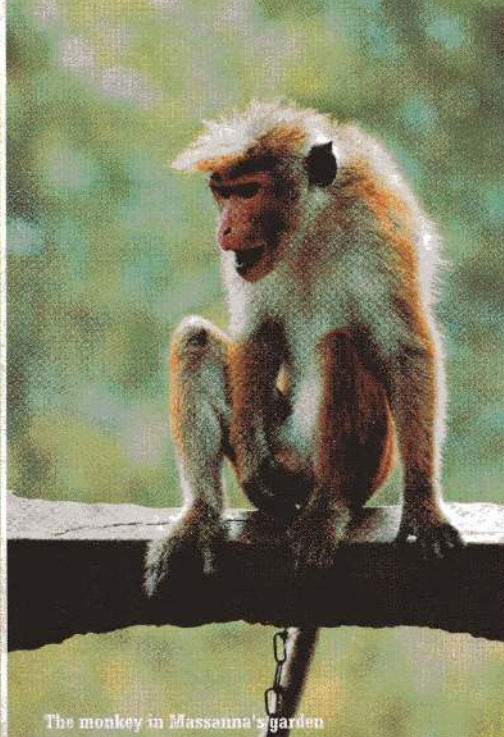
Anthony plays to a mesmerised audience

The old man holds the flute to his lips. He blows the first notes and what appears to be a glistening silver rope glides across his shoulders. He looks frail but his fingers are steady as he continues to play. With a gentle slithering movement the snake slips from his shoulders to the ground. The old man looks up and sees his audience backing away; his face breaks into a broad smile. "Come" he says laughing, "Why are you afraid?"

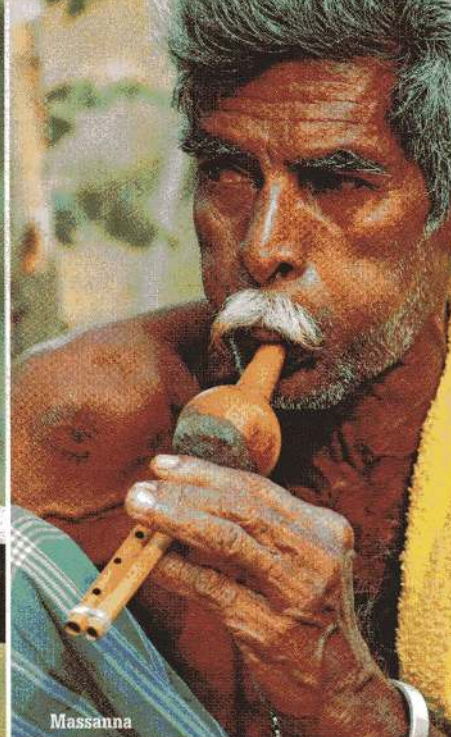
Words Chiranthi Rajapakse Photographs Prabath Chathuranga



Going about their daily chores, the Ahiguntaka community



The monkey in Massanna's garden



Massanna

The two brothers begin to play and gradually several snakes emerge, swaying and moving with sinuous movements, the dark markings on their hoods glistening in the sun.

Of all the customs and livelihoods found in Sri Lanka, snake charming is one of the most unusual; it evokes a range of emotions, ranging from curiosity to fear. Snake charming is usually practiced by members of the *Ahiguntaka* (gypsy) community.

Our search for the Ahiguntaka people takes us to Andarabedda, a small village off the Galgamuwa-Anuradhapura road. Andarabedda is not an easy place to find; at first, it seems as difficult to locate as the elusive gypsies who wander from place to place. We stop numerous times on the way to ask for directions to the village, which is home to the '*nai natavana minissu*' (snake charming people), the popular name by which the *Ahiguntaka* community is known. Finally a small gravel path winding between dry shrub jungle takes us there. In the noon day heat the quiet village seems to be slumbering. Small houses appear at intervals. Vehicles are a rarity; a group of children turn to stare at our jeep. We overtake women walking home, they carry their parcels on their heads gypsy

style, it's mystifying to see how well they manage this balancing feat.

We are looking for one of the oldest inhabitants of the village, the *Arachchi* (headman) Rengasamigey Massanna. Everyone seems to know him, a chorus of voices points us towards his home and when we arrive we find a slender white haired elderly man, dressed in sarong, an amulet hung around his neck. He is happy to talk to us - "Come, sit" he says calling us inside and indicating the *pedura* (mat), the only adornment in the verandah of his small house.

There are many things that Massanna is eager to tell us, it's hard to know where to start. As the name implies the *Ahiguntaka* people traditionally had no fixed abode and travelled from place to place. We are curious as to how the gypsies settled in this village and Massanna explains that they moved here only in the 1990s after being given government land. He remembers that his parents used to load their goods on donkeys and travel from place to place in Puttalam and Mannar.

Even though they have settled homes the gypsy lifestyle still persists.

Says Massanna, "We travel to far off places; Gampaha, Minuwangoda, Kegalle, Rambukkana, Matara, Hambantota, Tangalle... we walk everywhere to practice our trade of snake charming - some of us do fortune telling and work with animals as well." We can see this from looking around Massanna's garden where a small monkey balances on a wooden pedestal and looks at us curiously. Massanna takes his animals with him and travels to fairgrounds and markets to entertain people. Some of the poison fangs of the snakes are removed in order to make them less venomous, he says.

The village is a small one and news travels fast. As word goes around that strangers are here, more people appear and join the *pedura* or simply sit in the garden of Massanna's house. The women are dressed in *redda* and *hetta* and the men in sarongs but the presence of chains and amulets proclaims their gypsy heritage.

Massanna speaks to us in fluent Sinhalese, but we can hear the gypsies speaking amongst themselves in an unfamiliar language. "Telugu is

Disappearing lives; the Wadiga people

The Ahiguntuka people are one example of a community that persists with its traditional way of life in the face of change. Other such communities exist in Sri Lanka, some already dying out as its members change to fit in with the society around them. About an hour's drive from Andarabedda is another small village; Ralapanawa which is home to some of the last descendants of the Wadiga community. It's believed that the Wadiga people have a Northern Indian origin. According to popular myth it's said that they came to Sri Lanka with King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe, the last king of Kandy and the community is reputed to have had their own language and cultural practices. 71-year-old Gunapala is one of the earliest settlers who came to Ralapanawa. However he was not always called Gunapala. "Earlier I was called Mutthasami Weerappa Ponnaiyagey Mutthaiah. We came



Reflecting on a distant past, Gunapala and those who remain from the Wadiga community

from the 'Wadiga paramparawa'. Later we changed our names and now I use the name Sandanayake Mudiyanalagey Gunapala," he says. Many villagers in Ralapanawa have now taken Sinhalese names. The use of their language too has declined. Gunapala remembers that his grandparents spoke a different language. "It was different from Tamil or Sinhala," he says, but he now cannot

remember any words from it. He, along with 13 other families came to Ralapanawa in the early 1970s and started the settlement that is now a small village. "Our children have all intermarried and now there is no longer a Wadiga generation," he says. He seems to feel a sense of pride at their assimilation but there is also a sense of loss at how quickly a language and a way of life can disappear.




Anthony with other members of his family

our mother tongue" Massanna tells us. He points to one of the boys "We call him kurka (son). Kuthura means daughter." As he talks, another gypsy woman chips in with more words and

phrases, everyone is eager to teach us something. Massanna speaks three languages, Sinhalese, Telugu and Tamil and can write in Sinhalese. "I have to be able to speak with people from anywhere in the country – otherwise how can I earn a living?" he says philosophically. He sounds regretful though that among young gypsy children, the use of Telugu is waning.

As we talk Massanna's brother Anthony disappears into the house and comes out carrying several flat baskets. He places the baskets on the ground in front of the house, removes the lids and takes out several flutes. The two brothers begin to play and gradually several snakes emerge, swaying and moving with sinuous movements, the dark markings on their hoods glistening in the sun. One snake slithers onto the ground and winds itself around Anthony as the sound of the flute echoes around the garden. It looks intimidating and

in spite of Anthony's beckoning, we refuse to get too close, much to his amusement. Unafraid he grabs hold of the snake with a practiced hand. The surrounding villagers watch, small children among them; this is obviously a sight they are familiar with.

The sound of the flute is hypnotic and the swaying snakes hold the eye; it's tempting to linger. But evening is falling and we have a long way to travel from this small village. As we prepare to leave, Massanna coaxes the snakes back into the baskets and carefully places the baskets back inside his one roomed house. To our eyes it seems a strange place to keep snakes; but for Massanna and his people, snakes are not a threat but an asset. For this old man who travels the road with his flute and his basket, his snakes are his livelihood, the means by which he survives. In his eyes, it's fitting that he chooses to keep them close. 

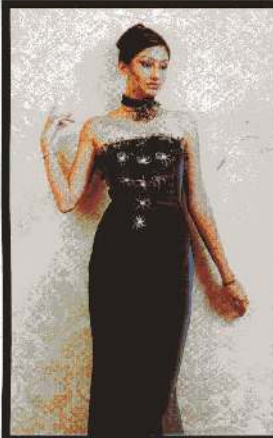
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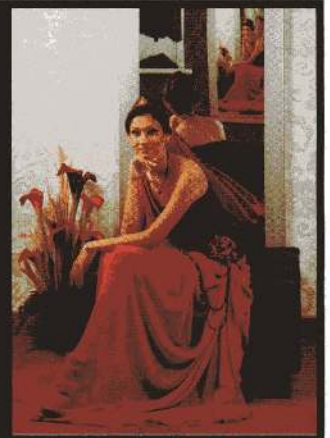


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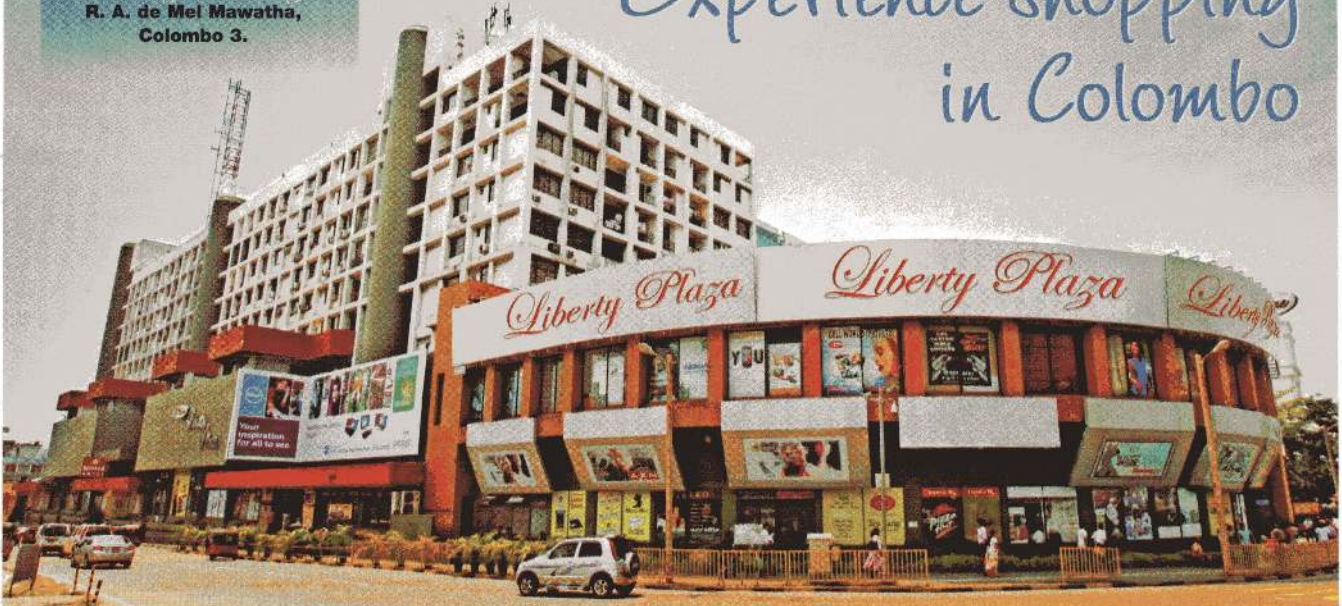
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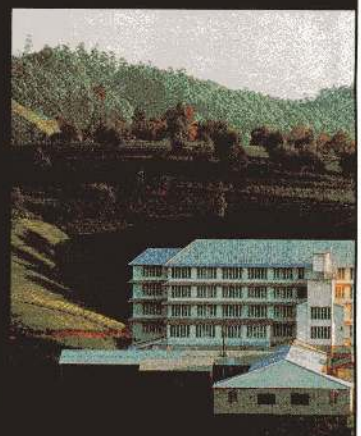
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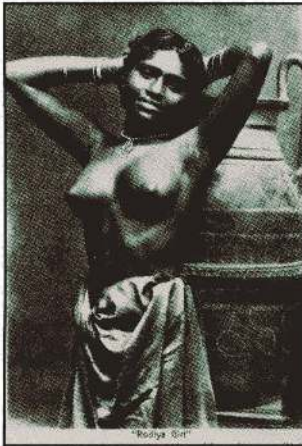


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SRI LANKAN DELIGHTS MADE EASY



“Sri Lankan cookery has evolved” says Kolu and these recipes reflect that. A few innovative tweaks and tips while preserving the authentic flavours and nutritional value allow two traditional dishes to find its way into a busy lifestyle.

Words Chiranthi Rajapakse **Photographs** Menaka Aravinda

Ready to eat; a dish of
tempered bean curry and
Ambul Thiyal

Ambul Thiyal

RECIPE

1 kilo fish cleaned and cut into chunks
100 grams (soaked) *goraka* ground to a fine paste
100 grams pepper corns (soaked) ground to fine paste
1 level teaspoon of salt
1 cup water

METHOD

Add *goraka* and pepper paste into a bowl. Then add the salt and water and blend till smooth. Then add the fish into the bowl and see that all the pieces are coated well.

Put the fish into a baking tray, cover with lid or foil and pop into a heated oven. Then lower the heat and let it cook for 40 minutes and take it out and cool.

This preparation can be kept for some time.



Ambul Thiyal

Kiribath and *Ambul Thiyal* – so many festive occasions conjure up the vision of this enticing combination. The distinctive fish dish of *Ambul Thiyal* doesn't always look enticing but once a well-prepared dish is tasted it's never forgotten. Its tangy, slightly sour but delicious flavour makes it the ideal accompaniment for *kiribath* or *pol roti*; it adds just the right amount of spiciness to the meal.

This is however an *Ambul Thiyal* recipe with a difference. Koluu characterises it as a perfect example of 'less is more'. The only ingredients

are *goraka*, pepper and salt, making the dish a quick and easy one to prepare. Says Koluu, "many recipes use other ingredients such as *karap- incha*, garlic and ginger. People don't believe that *Ambul Thiyal* can be made with only these few ingredients. But of all the recipes I've tried this is the best and the most effective method of preparation."

Koluu emphasises that the correct quantities of *goraka* and salt must be added in order to achieve the desired taste. He also advocates the use of a red fish such as *kelavalla* or *thalapath* in preparing this dish.

While it can be prepared with fish such as seer, it's hard to get the same taste says Koluu.

The key ingredient *goraka*, is a commonly found, though rather curious looking fruit. *Goraka* is valued for its sun-dried rind, which is used for flavouring curries and gives the *Ambul Thiyal* its distinctive sour sweet taste.

The method of preparation too, is unusual. Cooking *Ambul Thiyal* usually brings visions of time spent in front of a hot fire. Not any more. This recipe calls for the fish to be placed on a baking tray and popped



Though almost everyone looks forward to eating *Ambul Thiyal* few people now have the time to go through a lengthy process of preparing it. Therefore the innovative method of cooking it in an oven is more convenient and reflects how Sri Lankan cooking has changed with the times. "Season it nicely and put it in the oven and that's it" says Koluu. Good news for busy cooks.

**Koluu, Executive Chef and Partner,
Lemon Bar and Kitchen**

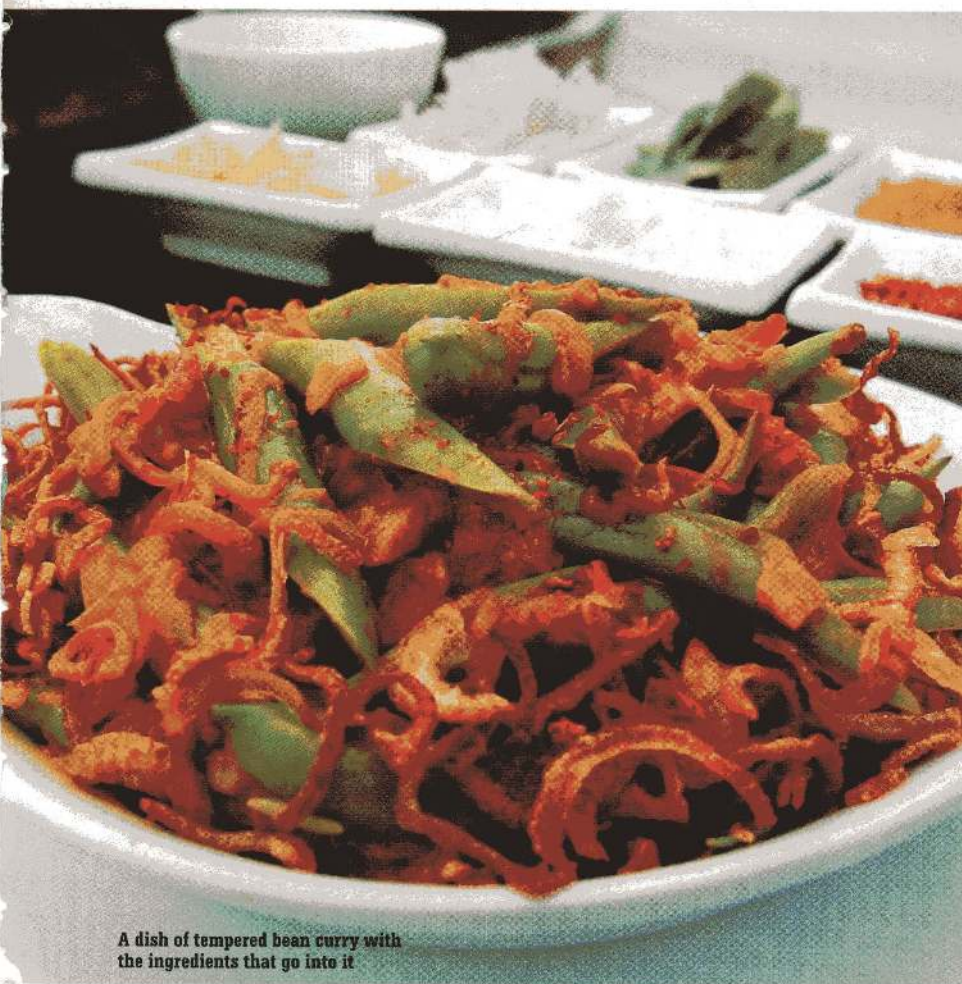
into the oven for about 40 minutes. "Basically it cooks in its own steam, which is why it's important to cover the dish" says Kolu. Apart from the usual accompaniments of hoppers, *kiribath*, or *roti*, Kolu also

recommends *Ambul Thiyal* with bread as an ideal snack.

Another advantage of *Ambul Thiyal* is that since both *goraka* and salt are good preservatives, the dish can be kept for a long

time. "Refrigerated it can be kept for months," Kolu advises. This makes it ideal for busy occasions, since the dish can easily be prepared beforehand and simply taken out of the fridge and reheated.

Tempered bean curry



A dish of tempered bean curry with the ingredients that go into it

Whatever the occasion, bean curry always blends in well with a rice and curry meal. Tempering the beans adds a tasty flavour and spices up what would otherwise be an ordinary dish. Much of the flavouring in this recipe comes from the condiment powder and cumin powder. Maldive fish also adds an extra taste to the dish, but it can be omitted by vegetarians.

When it comes to the cooking Kolu is particular that the beans

should be in a crunchy state. He explains, "Once you temper the beans and have it slightly cooked, quickly pour in the coconut milk. As soon as the coconut milk is cooked the dish should be taken off the fire immediately."

Adds Kolu, "The secret is fast cooking, the beans should not be overcooked. The policy is now to cook beans or any green vegetable over a high fire to preserve the nutritional value. Modern methods

RECIPE

500 grams beans stringed and cut into pieces
 Sprig of curry leaves
 150 grams of sliced onions
 3 cloves garlic sliced
 ¼ teaspoon of turmeric powder
 1 ½ teaspoons of chilli flakes
 1 ½ teaspoons of raw condiment powder
 1 teaspoon of cumin powder
 1 tablespoon of Maldive fish
 1 ½ cups of coconut milk
 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
 Salt

METHOD

In a bowl combine the beans with chilli flakes, condiment powders and salt. Heat pan on the fire, add vegetable oil and heat, then add the curry leaves, garlic, and onions. When the onions are browning add the beans and sauté for a few minutes, once you see them changing into a darker green add the Maldive fish and continue to sauté. Then add the coconut milk, cook for a further three minutes and take off the fire.

of Sri Lankan cooking are different; we capture the same flavour; but we have discovered the nutritional value."

Another advantage of fast cooking is that it keeps the appealing green colour of the beans. Says Kolu in conclusion, "One of the nicest things about eating rice and curry is seeing the colours on your plate." Remembering the colour and vividness of Sri Lankan meals, it's hard to disagree.



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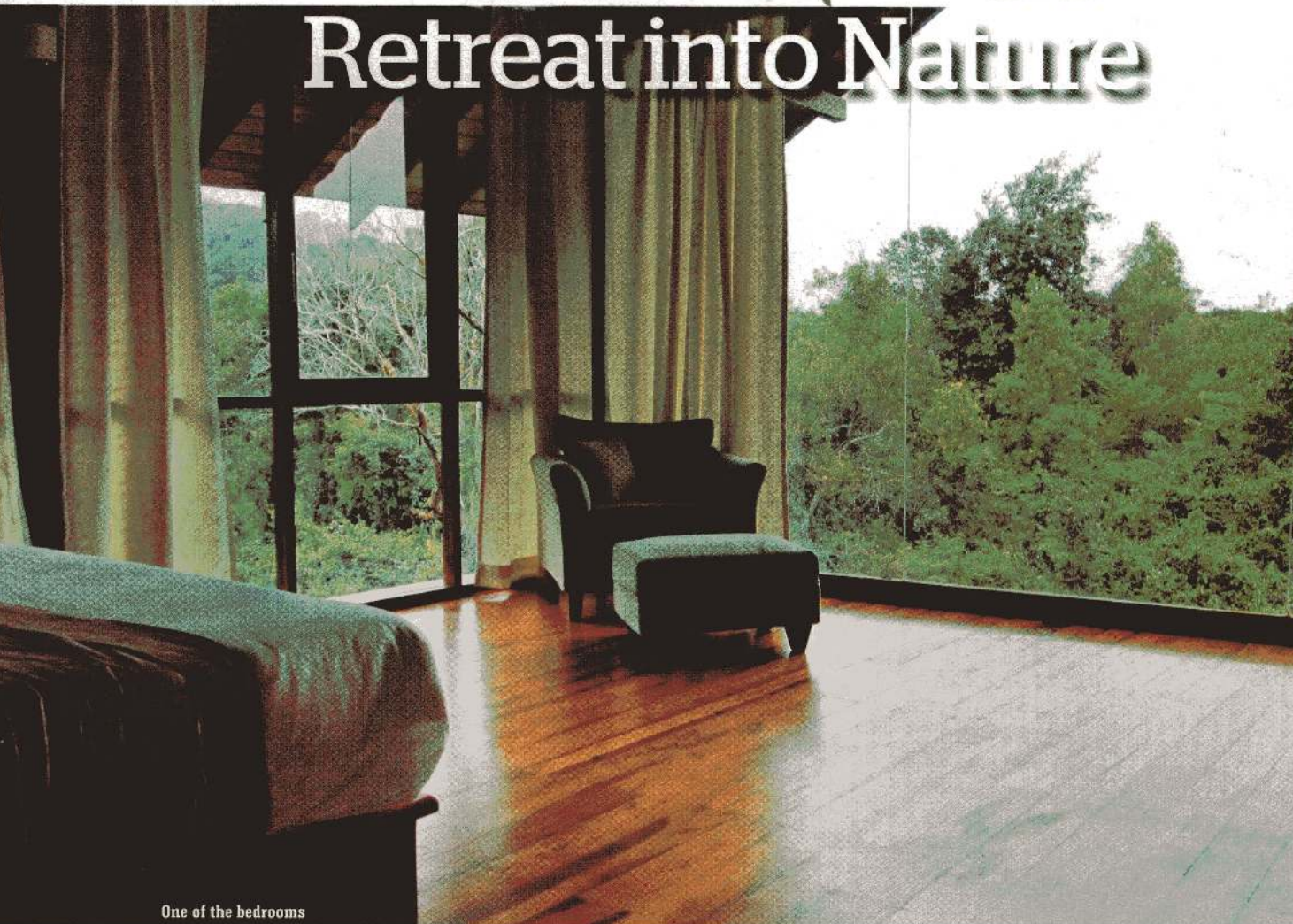
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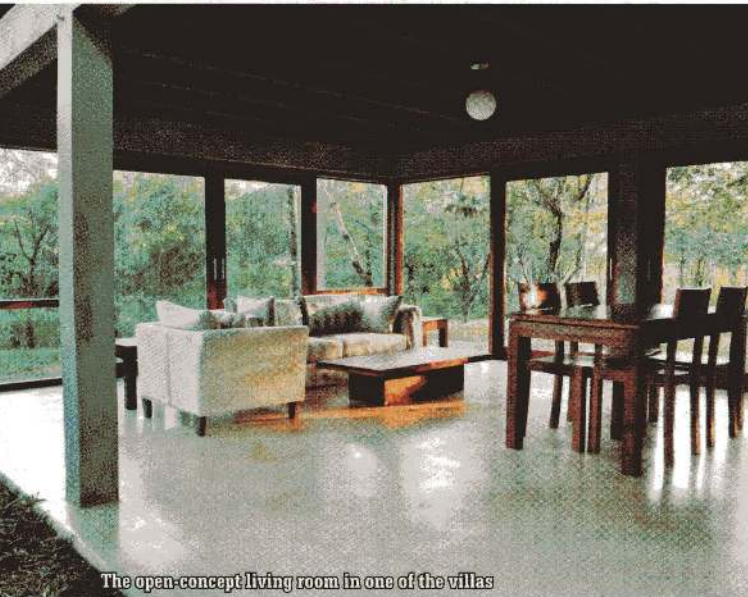
Words Haseena Razak

Wild Grass lies at the edge of the Lenawa village in Kumbukkadanwala located between Sigiriya and Dambulla, and within a few hours' driving distance of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Kandy and Trincomalee.

villa has two bedrooms and bathrooms. All the bedrooms provide luxuries like air conditioning and satellite television. The private bathrooms are open to the sky, providing yet more opportunity for guests to be one with nature.

arranged to nature reserves like Kaudulla, Minneriya or Wasgamuwa. Hot air ballooning expeditions can be arranged right from the Resort as well.

Committed to conducting business in harmony with nature,



The open-concept living room in one of the villas



The secluded swimming pool

This makes Wild Grass the perfect base from which to discover the cultural triangle and other destinations in Sri Lanka. The appeal of the 33-acre plot of pristine jungle land is enhanced by the natural lake by its side.

Only six acres of shrubbery have been cleared to build a reception area, kitchen, dining space and the villas that transport its guests into the heart of nature. With at least 50 feet separating each villa from the other and the resort's maximum capacity being around 15 people, Wild Grass promises solitude and tranquillity.

Natural materials like wood and stone have been used to build the spacious villas and the ample use of glass allows unobstructed views of the sylvan surroundings. The open-concept living room on the ground floor, invites the cooling afternoon breeze. The villas are designed for double or triple occupancy. The family

The Resort pays close attention to ensuring that guests feel at home. While meals are served in the main restaurant and terrace, they can be requested in the villas as well. Guests are given a choice of main courses and special requests can be accommodated. In addition, room service operates round the clock, and any midnight tummy-rumbles are put to rest.

If lounging around and feasting on the scrumptious food ever becomes too much of an indulgence to bear, aside from the secluded swimming pool, for those with an appetite for adventure, there is also the option of walking or riding a bicycle along the pathway that winds through the jungle within the Resort. Adjoining one of the boundaries of the Resort is a hill that guests can trek up to with a picnic. The summit offers a breathtaking view of the Sigiriya Rock. Additionally, safaris can be

Wild Grass uses solar power to generate hot water and partial lighting. The small garden provides fresh produce, grown organically, to supply the kitchen. Additional supplies are bought from the village, ensuring the community benefits from the Resort. Moreover, Wild Grass has provided running water and school supplies to a nursery school in the village.

At Wild Grass Nature Resort you will unwind and find a sense of peace. Perhaps, you will end up doing nothing, but considering the frantic pace of today's world, doing nothing at all is possibly the greatest gift.

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Dunnubindunu Wewa,
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SPEED DROME

A BIG THRILL

Words Chamindra Warusawitharane Photographs Menaka Aravinda

As we entered the Speed Drome premises the intense hum of go-karts speeding on the racing track greeted us. A group of youngsters were practicing on the track while their friends cheered them on from a safe distance. Backed by MacLarens Group with its great passion towards advancing Motor Sports in Sri Lanka, Speed Drome is frequented by young men and

women who want to get their basics right in go karting as a first step in their quest to enter the world of Motor Sports. Moving one step ahead of just providing a platform for training and go karting competitions, the Company itself holds annual go karting competitions to offer young Sri Lankans a chance to enter Motor Sports. The Company provides Formula cars to the ten best drivers in this

annual competition. The drivers then have the chance of competing in Motor Sports competitions in the local arena. Emdad Hussein is one of Speed Drome's success stories. He was identified as a talented driver and went on to win a Formula race for the first time in Katukurunda this year.

Speed Drome is not just about go karting. The whole family can spend a pleasant day within its



The racing tracks at Speed Drome

premises. Tearing ourselves away from the racing track we arrived at the Motor Sport themed restaurant at Speed Drome. The entrance was flanked by the winning car of the latest SPEED race in Pannala. After every race the winner's car takes this place of honour at the restaurant. Earlier, CEO of Speed Drome, Dinesh Jayawardana's racing car had been parked at the entrance in all its glory.

The black and white interior of the restaurant adorned with rims, engines and other parts of racing cars teased our imaginations with visions of Kimi Raikkonen and Michael Schumacher walking in at any given moment. Diners can watch the racing track through the restaurant's glass walls while enjoying food and beverages of their choice. The restaurant offers a range of food items from salads, soup, rice dishes, and beef steaks to burgers.

Behind the restaurant there is the kids' play area complete with a kids' racing track. Thus, any small boy or girl who wants to imitate dad can race to their hearts content. Vigilant parents have access to remote controls to the kid's racing cars so that the mischievous ones would not get into trouble. Swings, see-saws and other playthings are also in place for the kids.

There is something for everyone at Speed Drome. As we left the kids' play area and walked a little further with our eyes glued to the still visible racing track, we stepped into an area decked with tables, chairs and most importantly a swimming pool. At that time a group of kids were in the pool frolicking around and practicing while their parents watched on.

The complete set of facilities and the ambiance at Speed Drome present an ideal setting for a variety of occasions from simple family get togethers to high profile corporate events. Companies can

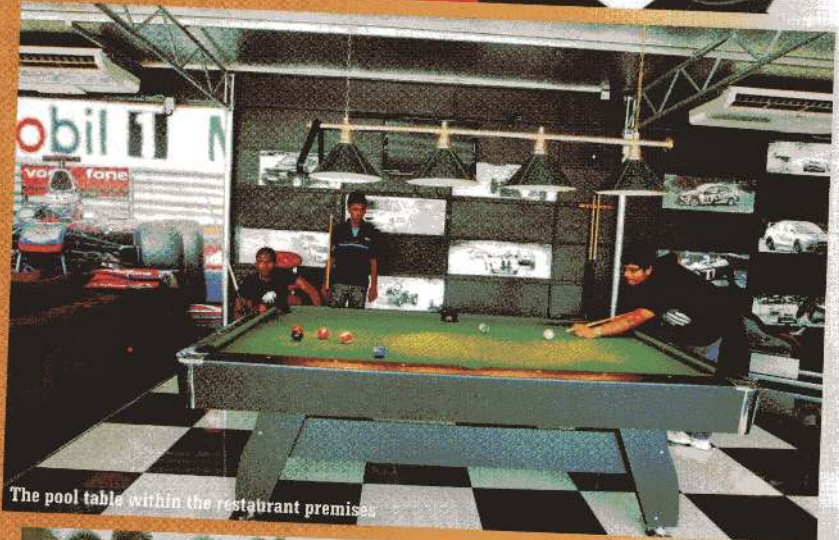
either organise individual go karting competitions or team building competitions apart from spending an undoubtedly eventful day at Speed Drome. Evidently Families can simply race, dine, play, chat and have fun at this facility. A dip in the swimming pool seems like a good way to end the day in any case.

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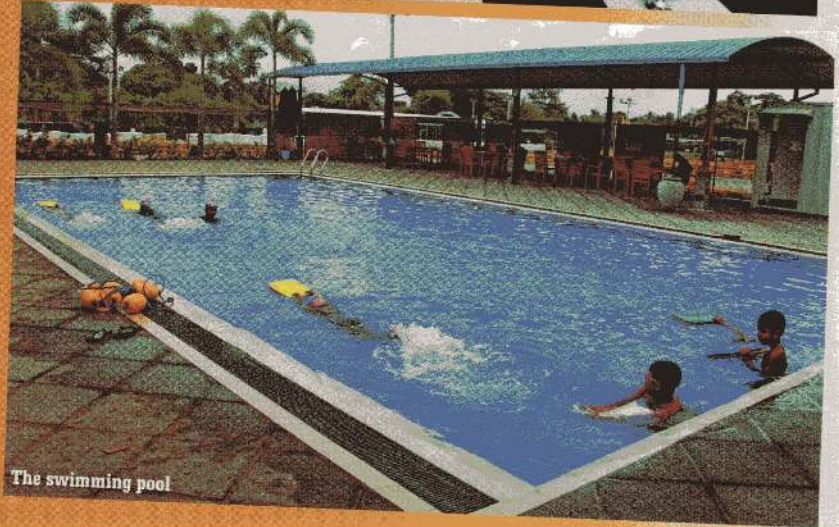
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The Motor Sport themed restaurant

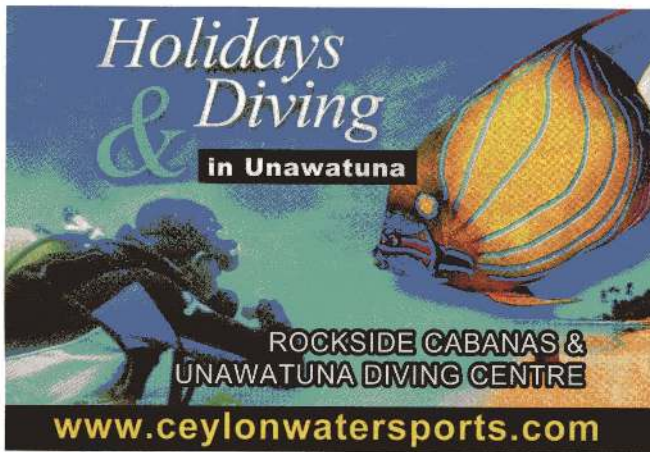


The pool table within the restaurant premises



The swimming pool

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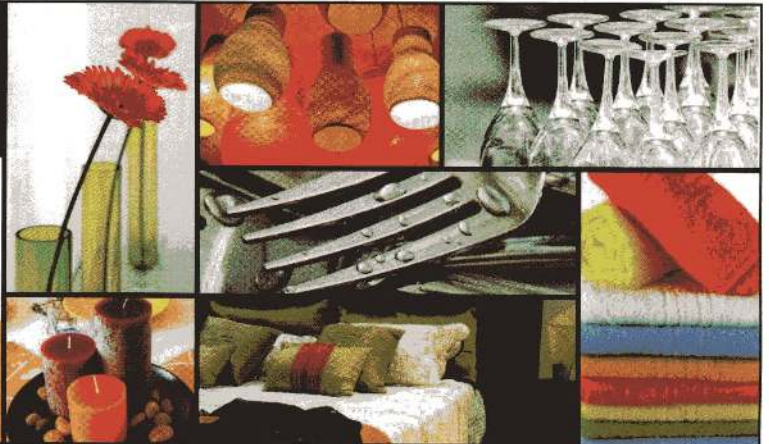
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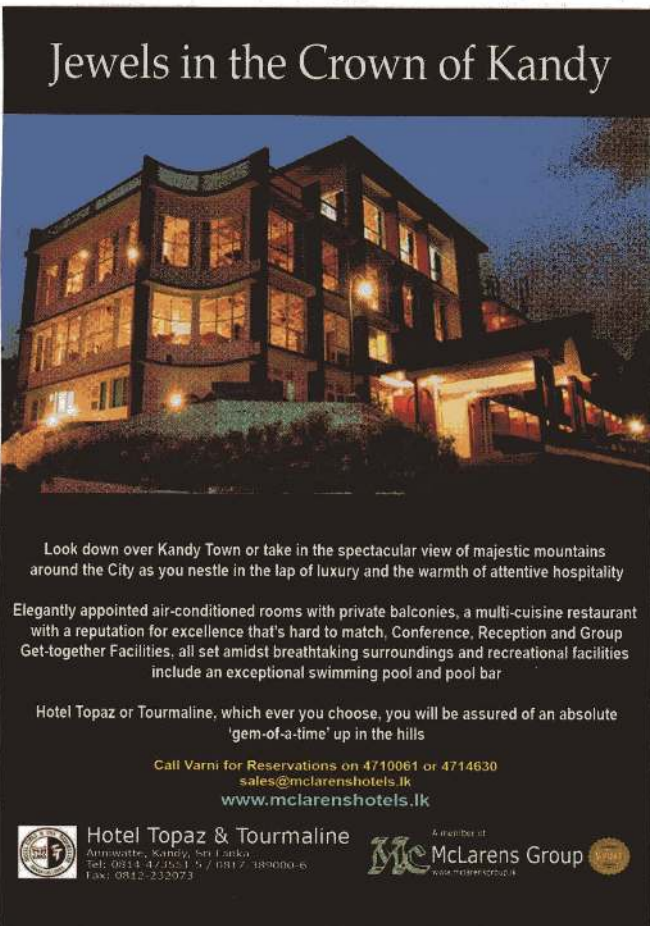
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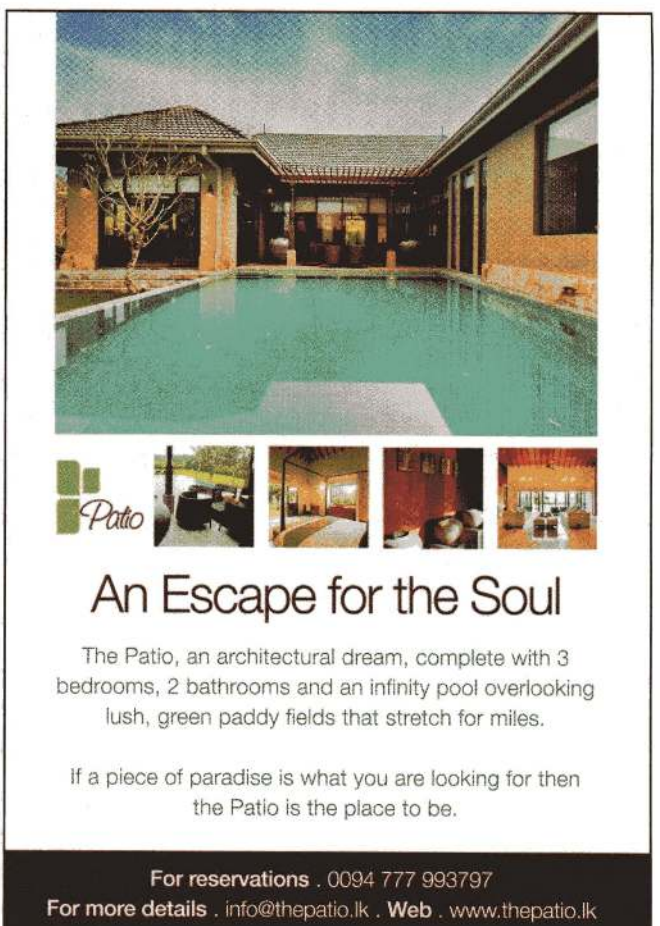
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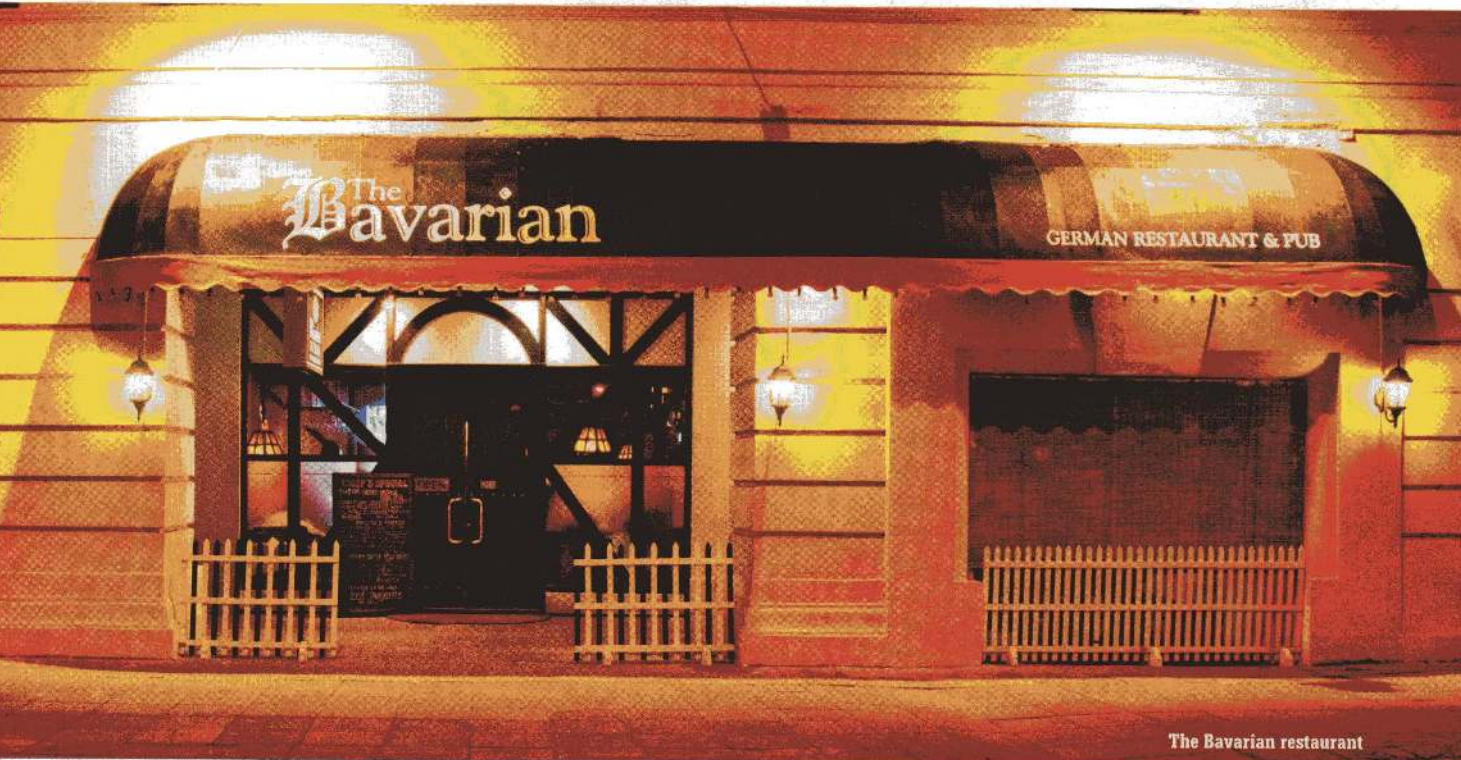
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THE BAVARIAN OKTOBERFEST



The Bavarian restaurant

Just as it is the tradition in Bavaria in Germany each year, the Oktoberfest comes alive in Colombo as well, more specifically, at The Bavarian – the restaurant that serves authentic German cuisine. Elaborating its special Oktoberfest celebrations held last year, this year The Bavarian bests itself with special menus, competitions and fitting atmosphere of typical German style for some authentic festive cheer.

“The main focus of course will be the food, and this special menu will include a more traditional German Oktoberfest cuisine,” says Director Chavan Mendis of the special menu for the Oktoberfest. And for this festive season customers can expect a robust variety of typical German recipes readied from start to finish of a meal. Cheese platters and special cold meats include the starters, which can be followed by

typical German dishes namely, pork knuckle, roasted pork and a range of German sausages along with mustards. While everything from roast chicken to pan fried chicken make up for the variety of chicken preparations, Vienna Schnitzel, and imported meats the likes of farm raised venison, Australian veal, Australian rib and beef rib roast add to a hearty and versatile menu.

Aside from the many sumptuous meat dishes, customers can pick from a range of seafood dishes that also include the old favourite at The Bavarian – the baked crab. “Aside from this special menu with typical Bavarian items, customers can expect firm favourites included in the menu,” asserts Director Niluka Mendis. And how could a meal be complete without a decadent dessert? Aptly, the Oktoberfest menu extends to desserts as well with German chocolate


cake, blackforest cake, marble cake and an assortment of strudels to choose from. In addition, the palatable delights that arrive in generous portions typical of The Bavarian are intended to be washed down with a refreshing German beverage.

This year the Oktoberfest atmosphere is heightened with competitions for good measure and customers can join in the festive cheer with the ‘fastest burger eating’ and other such competitions. What’s more with typical Bavarian décor and traditional German music to transform its cosy setting, The Bavarian promises an Oktoberfest fever in true Bavarian style.

The Oktoberfest will be held from October 14 to 23, 2011.

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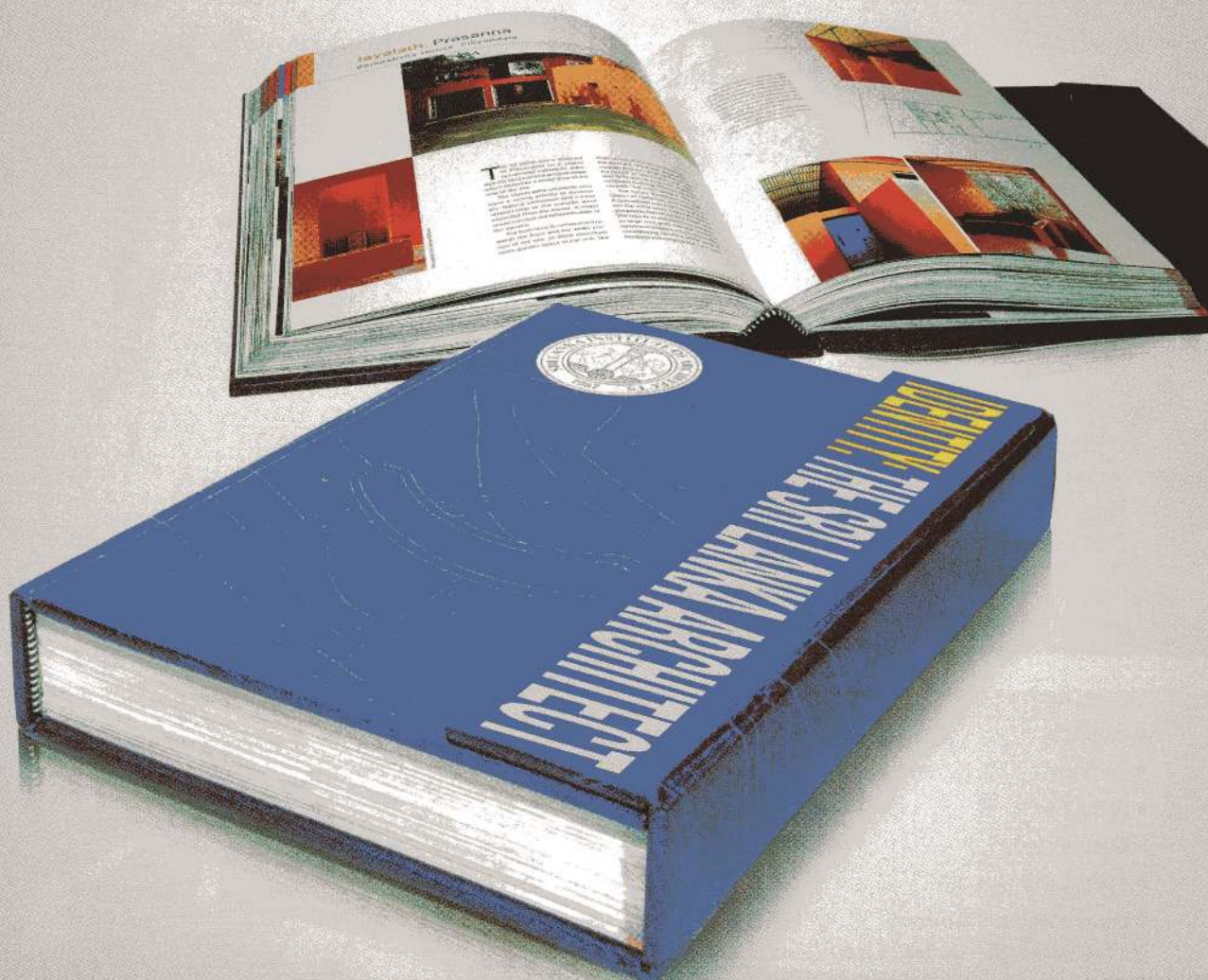
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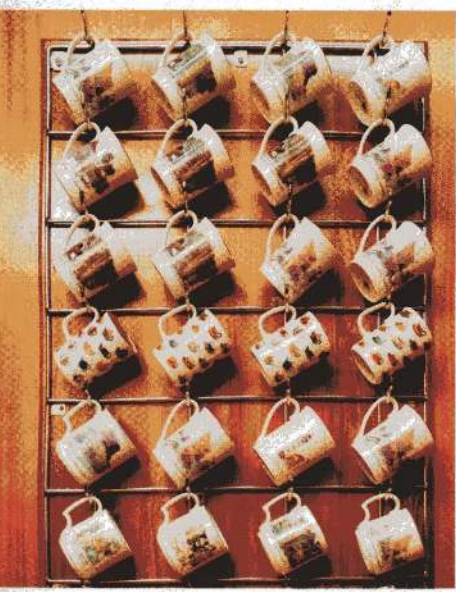
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(L - R): Anselm B Perera, J C Page and Nelson Perera



(L - R): J C Page, Nelson Perera and Anselm B Perera



(L - R): Jayantha Fernando, Selvarani Paul, Kapila Thalagala and Arjuna Perera



Porcelain Items



Birendra Perera



Amaya Lake - Dambulla



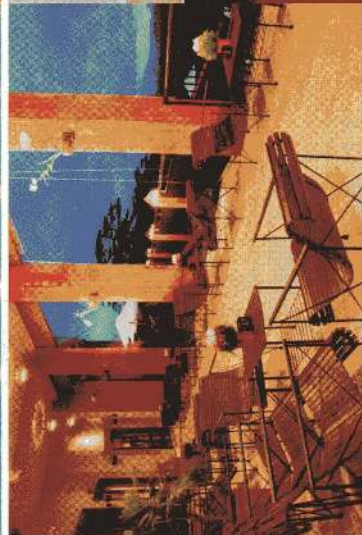
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Italian Café and Restaurant **PASCUCCI** opens in Colombo



(L-R): Anton Venderkoon, Executive Director – Universal Group, Stefano, Director – Pascucci Franchise, Dr Sujeewa Lokuhewa, Group Managing Director/CEO – Danaroso Holdings, Nalaka Edirisinghe, Group Chairman – Universal Group, Eddy, Training Manager – Pascucci and Rasangee Weerasinghe, Managing Director – Universal Group at the opening

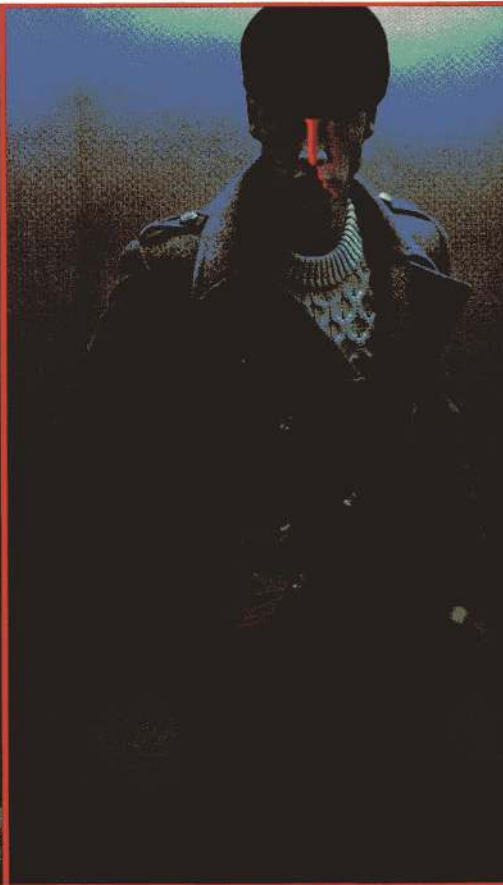


Hot beverages available at Pascucci



Sandwiches are among a range of snacks available at the café

Renowned Italian café and restaurant brand Pascucci opened its first café and restaurant in Colombo. Speaking about this new addition to the Colombo café scene, Dr Sujeewa Lokuhewa, Group Managing Director/CEO of Danaroso Holdings, member of the Universal Group, franchise holder for Pascucci in London and Sri Lanka, pointed out that the consumer today was quality conscious and demanding and able to judge what is authentic and not. "Pascucci is one of the fastest growing Italian café and restaurant brands in Europe and we have been the franchise for the brand in London for the past eight years. We want to bring that experience to Sri Lanka now," he stated. The restaurant will serve espressos, lattes, cappuccinos and other ranges of beverages, including their signature beverage "Pascuccio". An array of dishes such as pastas, pizzas, salads and sandwiches will also be available.



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As a traditional Japanese restaurant, diners enjoy sushi and tempura at Ginza Hohsen. Floor to ceiling windows create a stunning setting at Thorana Lounge. The Echelon Pub has international beers and sports coverage. Spoons serves the finest cuts, the freshest seafood and a host of exotic specialities.

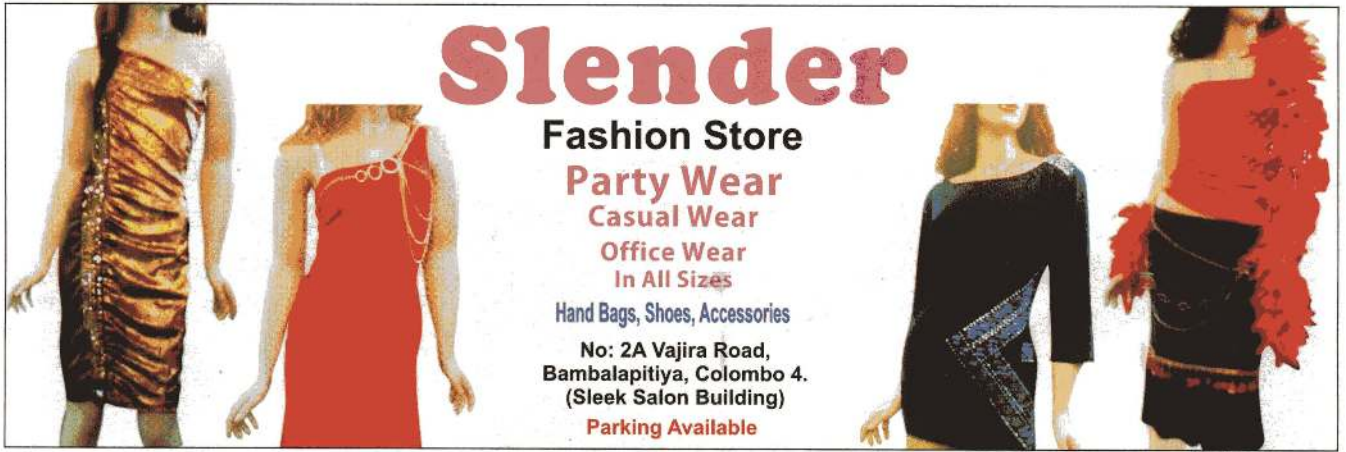
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NOTEBOOK

Asha Bhosle commends Chutneys restaurant



The autographed photo of herself and the Chutneys team, sent by Asha Bhosle

On her visit to Sri Lanka, celebrated singer Asha Bhosle enjoyed a meal at Cinnamon Grand's Chutneys restaurant. Upon her return to India she sent the restaurant an autographed group photo of herself with the Chutneys team, including the restaurant's Indian chefs – Chef Harrish and

Chef Bala. She expressed her praise and thanks for a pleasant evening at Chutneys. Recognised by the World Records Academy as the 'Most Recorded Artist' in the world, Asha Bhosle stayed at the Cinnamon Grand during her visit to the country for her much-anticipated concert with Bathiya and Santhush.

Nuga Gama celebrates International World Indigenous People's Day



Thirty children from different parts of the country gathered together at Nuga Gama to learn about the world's indigenous tribes, as a part of Cinnamon Grand's celebration of the International World Indigenous People's Day

Nuga Gama at Cinnamon Grand Hotel paid tribute to the indigenous tribes of the world as part of its celebration of International World Indigenous People's Day.

The occasion is a bid to create awareness and understanding of indigenous tribes around the world. A group of 30 children selected by the *Funday Times* from different parts of the country, were given the chance to attend a series of workshops on the

culture of indigenous people.

During the workshops a group of dancers of the Werapitiya Dance Troupe entertained the audience with a traditional Veddah song and dance.

Three members of the National Archery Team, representing the Colombo Archery School, conducted a session on archery, giving each child several chances at hitting a target.

Chef Weeraman excels at the Annual Culinary Awards



Chef Weeraman's award-winning creation

Chef Weeraman, Master Sculptor at Cinnamon Grand, produced an award winning entry at the Annual Culinary Awards, where he received the coveted Gold Excellence Award. "There is always something new to learn from your work," he reflected and added, "That is why the appeal of putting your heart and soul into a creation, will never fade away." Ever the wildlife art aficionado, Weeraman drew inspiration for his masterpiece from a documentary feature on the National Geographic Channel. "It was a Harris Hawk at prey," he recalls, "and the image seemed very powerful to me. We were not instructed to work to any particular theme for the competition, so I felt that the theme of nature would be an apt one." After all the time spent hard at work sketching, experimenting and sculpting, the result of Weeraman's efforts took the entire competition by storm.

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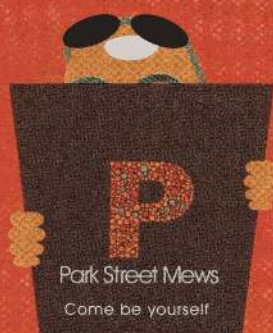
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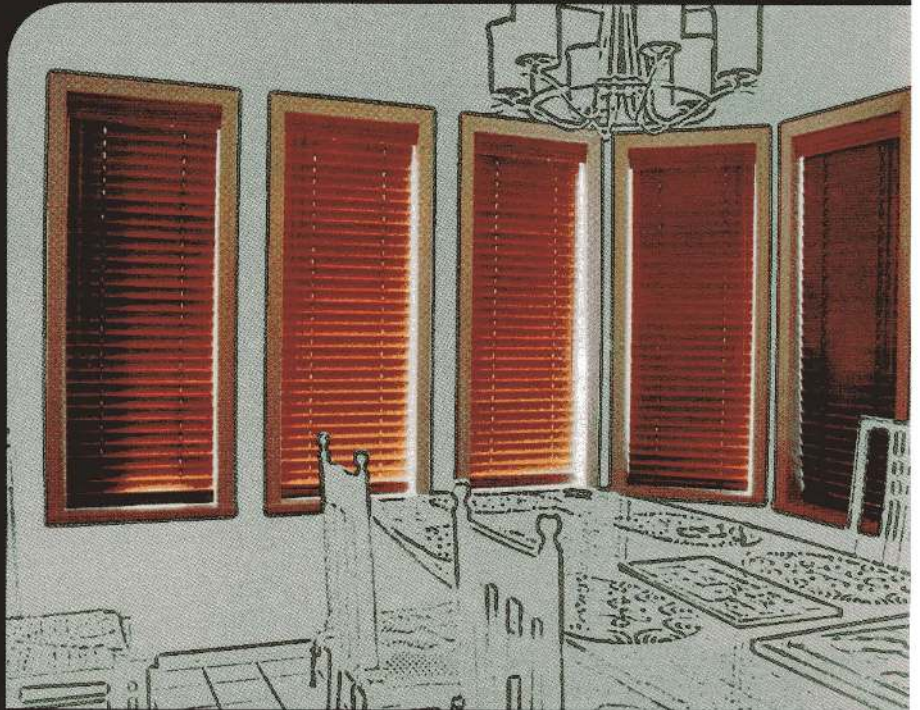
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Cinnamon Grand's diabetic-friendly menu



A few treats from the diabetes menu

Each of Cinnamon Grand's restaurants has its own diabetes menu for lunch and dinner, and simply because the food featured is healthy, it is by no means Spartan. Whether one's preference is Italian, sea food, fusion, fine dining or hearty pub grub, there is an impressive variety of delectable dishes to be sampled. Featuring an appetising array of over 30 dishes, the menu includes poached salmon with horse-radish sauce and steamed orange modha fillet with

herbs, not to mention cinnamon apple turnover and black forest trifle.

Compiled with the combined insights of dieticians, doctors and other luminaries, the menu takes into account the nutritional requirements of a diabetic. The Diabetic Menu provides a lower carbohydrate, sodium, and fat alternative to customers with or without diabetes, who are conscious about selecting healthier food choices.

Galadari Hotel empowers local youth



Sampath Siriwardena, General Manager, Upali Perera, Financial Controller, Shirani David, Human Resources Manager and senior managers of Galadari Hotel stand with Chief Incumbent Venerable Hawelwela Sunanda Thero and a few of the youth who began training at Galadari Hotel

Making a contribution towards the development of employment opportunities for local communities,

the Galadari Hotel ventured into its Corporate Social Responsibility project "Hospitality Training and

Empowerment" in the City of Bibile, Monaragala District. Assisting Galadari in this regard, the project was channelled through Venerable Hawelwela Sunanda Thero, Chief Incumbent of Unagolla Purana Rajamaha Viharaya.

The Hotel has reached out to eleven young men who have joined in this CSR initiative to learn and discover the many areas of Hotel Management. Spanning over a period of one year, this training programme will comprise of theory as well as practical exposure providing them a detailed description and hands on experience in areas such as housekeeping, kitchen stewarding, laundry, and Food and Beverage.

Rudolf Tröstler named General Manager of Hilton Colombo



Rudolf Tröstler, General Manager of Hilton Colombo

Hilton Worldwide announced the appointment of Rudolf Tröstler as General Manager of Hilton Colombo.

"Tröstler has a successful track record with Hilton Worldwide and has in-depth global hospitality knowledge working in Austria, Australia, the United Kingdom and Malaysia. His commitment to service excellence and experience makes him a great asset to the team," said William Costley, Vice President for Operations in Southeast Asia, Hilton Worldwide. "We are confident that under his leadership, Hilton Colombo will continue to set the benchmark

in quality accommodation and guest satisfaction in Sri Lanka."

Tröstler joined Hilton Worldwide in 1995 and took on various Finance and Purchasing roles at Hilton Vienna and Hilton Vienna Plaza. He was Room Service Manager and Catering Operations Manager at Hilton Sydney and Hilton Brisbane, before he was Food and Beverage Services Manager and Operations Manager at Hilton Adelaide. He then became Director of Operations at Hilton Petaling Jaya.

Tröstler was most recently the Hotel Manager at Hilton Kuching and Hilton Batang Ai Longhouse Resort.

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In front of Elephant Transit Home



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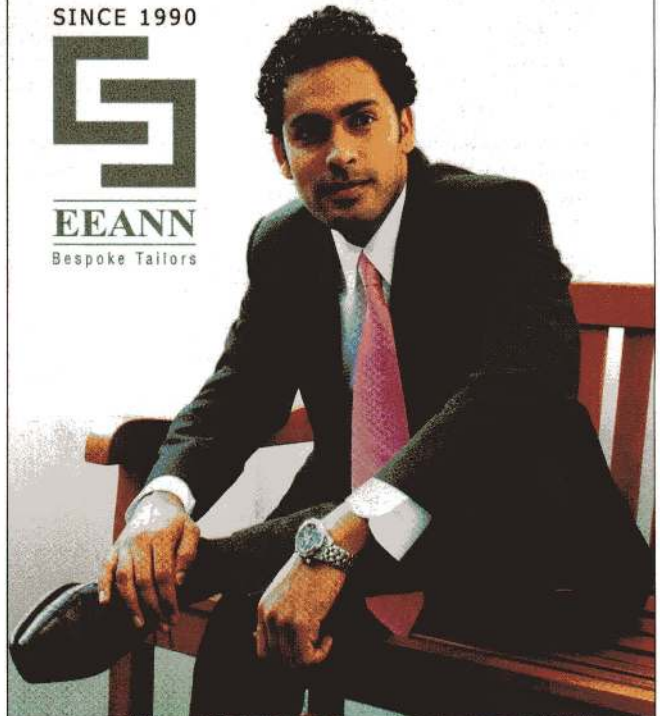
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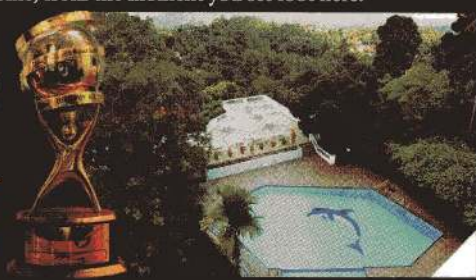
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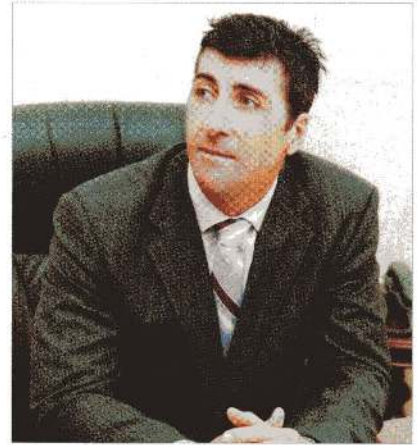
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Jason Cooley appointed General Manager of Galle Face Hotel

Jason Cooley has joined the Galle Face family as the hotel's recently appointed General Manager. Jason Cooley, an Australian, began by working in Australia, South Asia, the South Pacific and the Maldives. Having worked for some of the leading hotels around the world Jason Cooley has now come to Sri Lanka to make a positive difference to the Galle Face Hotel.

"We have a five year plan that is currently in operation for the hotel, which will include a few renovations that are scheduled

to take place. However, it is not our intention to harm or spoil the original grandeur of the hotel. We hope to retain the charm and beauty of the hotel's yesteryear whilst enhancing its beauty in every manner possible and thereby build it up to the proper level that does due justice to the 'Grand Old Lady'. We are also looking at successfully catering to the younger generation, so one should expect some very welcoming changes to take place through our five-year transition period," said Jason Cooley.



Jason Cooley, General Manager of Galle Face Hotel

"Pasticcino" at Galle Face Hotel



One of the scrumptious cakes at Pasticcino

Pasticcino, the ultimate pastry restaurant, is now located at the Galle Face Hotel's Regency Wing. The restaurant offers a variety of savouries and cakes. Pasticcino offers over 25 varieties of cakes including the Black Forest, Strawberry Cheese Cake and Apple Fudge. In addition to this, 30 varieties of savories are available at Pasticcino. There is also a wide selection of fresh breads. Pasticcino also has a collection of chocolates

ranging from white to dark chocolate.

The most popular counter at Pasticcino is the Sandwich Bar, where customers have the ability to select their own fillings and ingredients that go into the making of the sandwich.

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Heritage Hotels win big at the National Green Awards



President Mahinda Rajapaksa presenting the award to Jeevaka Weerakone, Executive General Manager of Heritage Kandalama

The Heritage brand was once again in the spotlight when Heritage Kandalama and Heritage Tea Factory emerged

winners at the National Green Awards. Heritage Kandalama, committed to sustainable practices from conceptualisation

to construction, was awarded the Gold Award in the Large Scale Hotel category. This prestigious award was one of four Gold Awards presented at the award ceremony, which three hundred applicants vied for. Heritage Tea Factory walked away with the Silver Award in the Medium Scale Hotel category.

Speaking about the momentous win, Ravi de Silva, Environmental Consultant of Aitken Spence Hotels said, "This is reaping the harvest of what was sown starting from 1994 by the pioneers. The philosophies practiced by them are still vigorously carried out by our present team."

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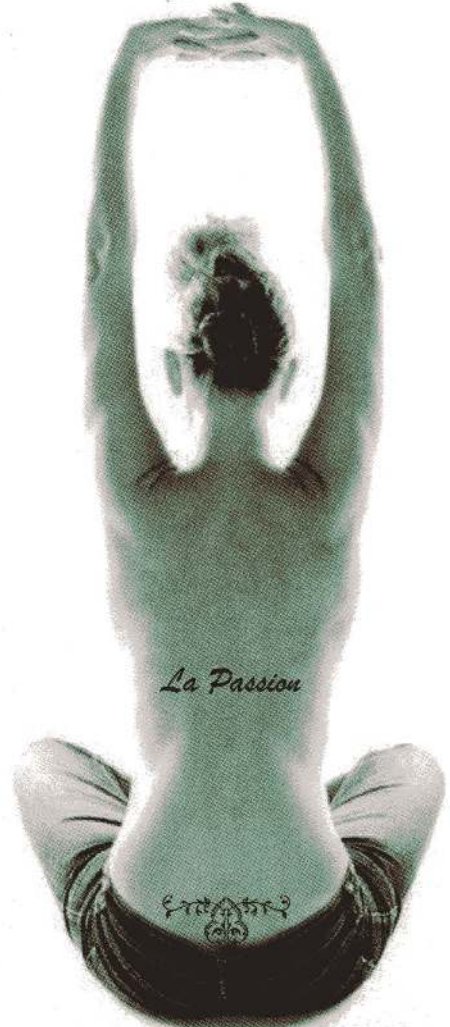
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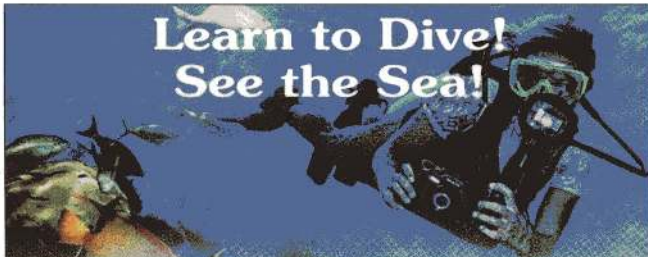
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Former President of Singapore visits the Mount Lavinia Hotel



Anura Dewapura, General Manager, Mount Lavinia Hotel, with former President, S R Nathan and Madam Urmila

Former President of the Republic of Singapore S R Nathan and Madam Urmila stayed at the Mount Lavinia Hotel during their visit to Sri Lanka. The former President who has visited the hotel 30 years ago

expressed his delight in coming back for a brief stay.

On their departure from the hotel, they left with assurances of visiting their "home away from home" before long.

Chilean Winemakers Night at Mount Lavinia Hotel



Anura Dewapura, General Manager, Mount Lavinia Hotel (centre) with Christian Sotomayor and Brett Jackson (right)

Mount Lavinia Hotel's Chilean Winemaker's Night, held at the Maitland State Room, marks great significance in the food and drink circle of Sri Lanka, as this was the first time Latin New World wines were introduced to Sri Lanka in collaboration with the Favourite Group. Popular Chilean wines such as Valdivieso Single Vineyard Merlot, Valdivieso Reserva Chardonnay and last but not least Valdivieso Calballo Loco, known as the super star of Chilean wines were introduced

and launched for the first time in Sri Lanka for enthusiastic and eagerly waiting palates. The chefs of Mount Lavinia Hotel (Justin Dingle, Indika Jayawardena and Asanka Karunaratne) paired the wines perfectly with their five star course dinner.

The event was perfected by the presence of famous Chilean winemaker Brett Jackson and the host of the night was Anura Dewapura, General Manager, Mount Lavinia Hotel.

S H Sarath to hold solo exhibition at the Lionel Wendt



Artist S H Sarath (left) and one of his paintings (above)

A solo exhibition of paintings by S H Sarath will be held from 21 October to 23 October 2011 at the Lionel Wendt. Over 20 oil paintings done by painter S H Sarath, who has 40 years of experience to his credit, will be featured at the exhibition. The paintings will depict nature, beauty and women with several paintings illustrating the relations between Valliyamma and the peacock. Speaking about his works of art Sarath said, "I decided to feature the Valliyamma series in my exhibition this time as her story is a well known story in Sri Lankan culture. Her story in connection to God Skandha and the peacock has been portrayed in Sri Lankan abstract art for a while now." The exhibition also features a series of paintings depicting Sri Lankan women and the importance of their role in shaping the future of the country. In addition to holding over 30 exhibitions in Sri Lanka Sarath has participated in group exhibitions both at home and abroad. He has held solo exhibitions in several countries including Germany, Thailand, Malaysia, Yugoslavia, Norway, Canada, Australia and Switzerland.

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Mount Lavinia Hotel takes part in social sustainability project



Anura Dewapura, the General Manager of Mount Lavinia Hotel accepting the products from the artisans

Mount Lavinia Hotel has become part of a project to support the livelihoods of artisans, who use

Palmyrah to create their products, in rural and war-affected areas in Jaffna and Mannar. This

project, 'Design for Sustainable Development' (DFSD) was initiated by the Academy of Design (AOD) under the invitation of the reawakening project of the Ministry of Economic Development. DFSD is currently executed under the Palmyrah Development Board under the Ministry of Traditional Industries. The project helps artisans and communities engaged in craft through design develop their products, while connecting high-end customers such as the Mount Lavinia Hotel with the artisans, who produce large quantity orders.

Artisans from Mannar and Pungudutivu Island in Jaffna visited Mount Lavinia Hotel to present the completed order of Palmyrah products to Anura Dewapura, the General Manager of Mount Lavinia Hotel.

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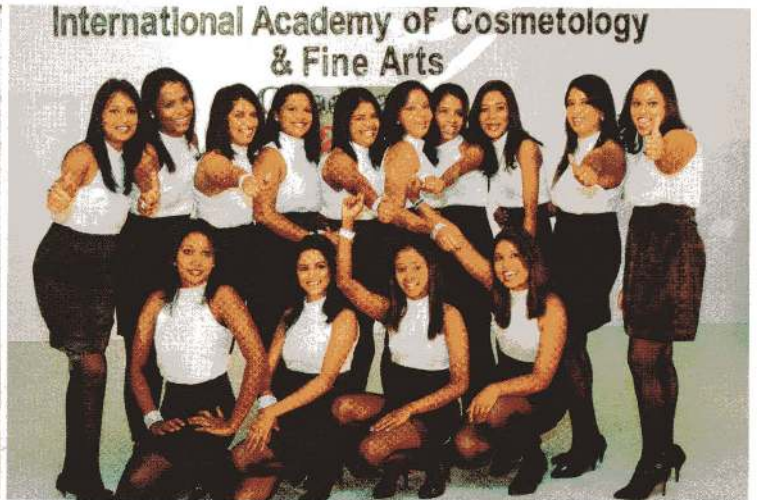
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Ramani Arsecularatne with her family



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those who completed a course in Hair Dressing as well as those who followed a six-month course in Beauty Therapy under the Ranaviru Pranama Scholarship programme received their certificates at the occasion. The War

Widows Association selected and nominated a group of 25 women to follow the course under the Ranaviru Pranama Scholarship programme. The evening concluded with a fashion show organized by students.



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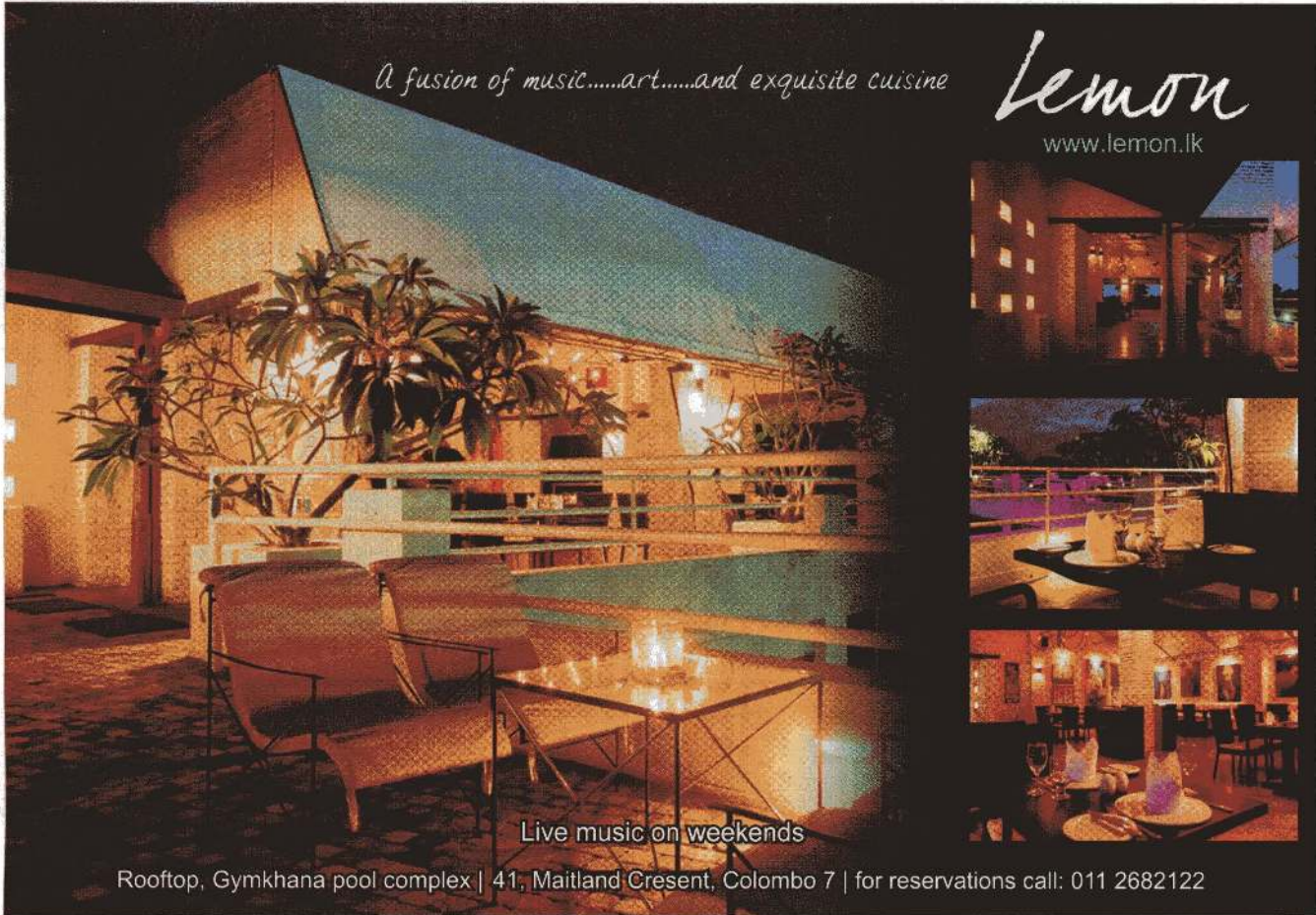
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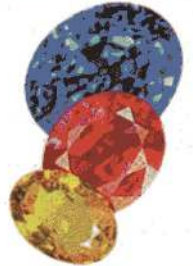
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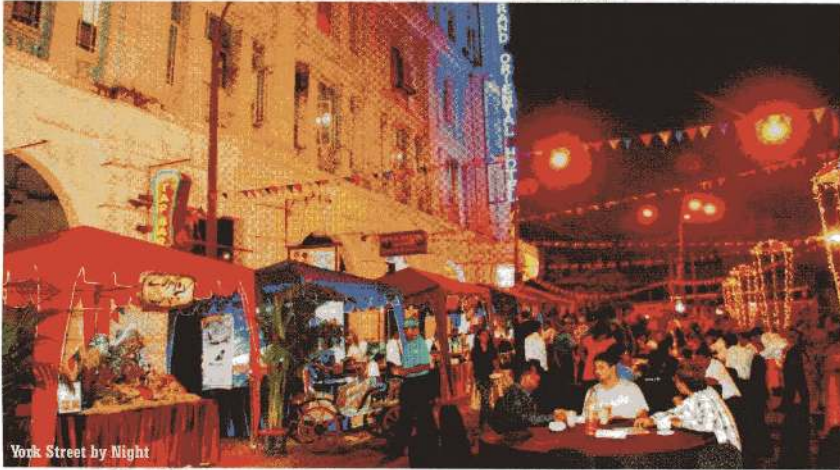
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York Street by Night at Grand Oriental Hotel



Grand Oriental Hotel is re-launching its very own and well renowned York Street by Night for guests every alternative week.

At York Street by Night the hotel provides various food stalls and a selection of beverages. There will be a live DJ and other events to create a festive atmosphere. The hotel hopes to develop and expand the services with added entertainment to make York Street the most happening street in town to be in at night.

Peacock Beach Hotel launches new fine dining restaurant



Peacock Beach Hotel launched its new Blue Diamond fine dining restaurant by hosting the Australian cricket team for cocktails. The restaurant, which can cater for up to 80 guests, adds a touch of luxury and variety to the newly refurbished four-star hotel. The Australian team, which was staying at the hotel for the 2nd and 3rd One Day International games in Hambantota, were the first guests to experience the Blue Diamond Restaurant.

LIFT Designer wear unveils its latest collections for the season



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LIFT Designer wear has unveiled its latest collections of party dresses and evening

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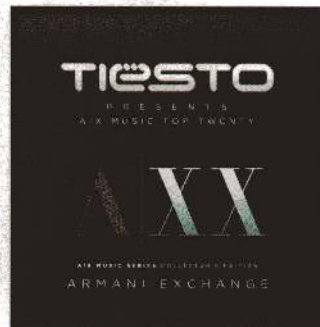
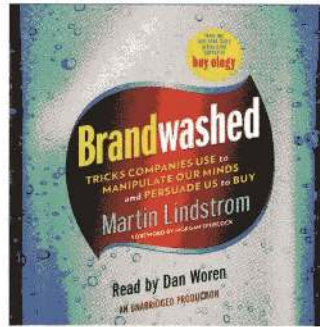
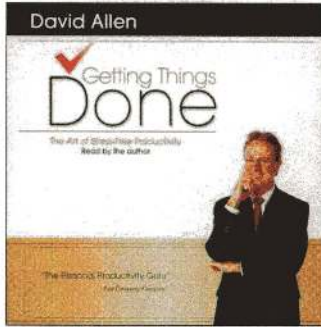
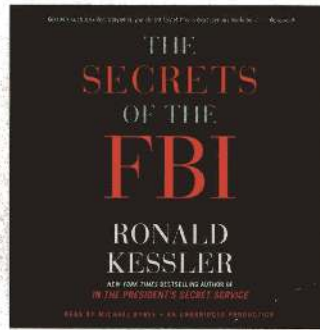
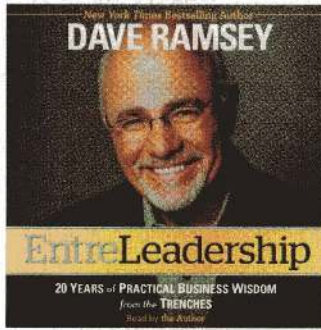
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A H M Fowzie, Senior Minister of Urban Affairs and Rishad Bathiyutheen, Minister of Industry and Commerce take a look at the jewellery displayed

FACETS Sri Lanka 2011 was held recently, attracting a large number of foreign and local visitors.

The 21st Sri Lanka International Gem and Jewellery Show was declared open by the Chief Guest,

Rishad Bathiyutheen, Minister of Industry and Commerce. Hans-Georg Wild, world renowned gem trader, the Russian trade delegation and the Chinese trade delegation participated as guests of honour at the event.

Chanaka Ellawala, Chairman, FACETS Sri Lanka said, "Having FACETS Sri Lanka is a unique opportunity for gem and jewellery industry stakeholders in neighbouring countries to view and buy our products. This is a huge opportunity to develop trade with our neighbours."

This year's show featured two main sections: gemstone wholesalers and jewellery and other services. A special collector's gemstone corner provided visitors the opportunity to view rare and precious gemstone pieces and materials.

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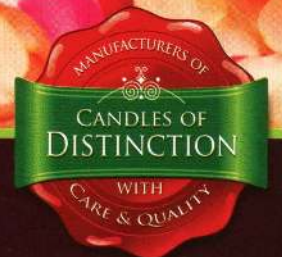
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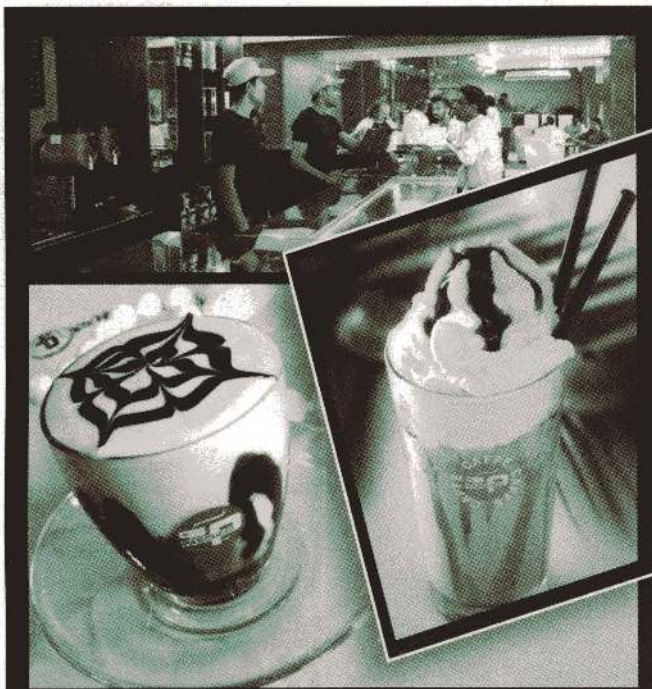
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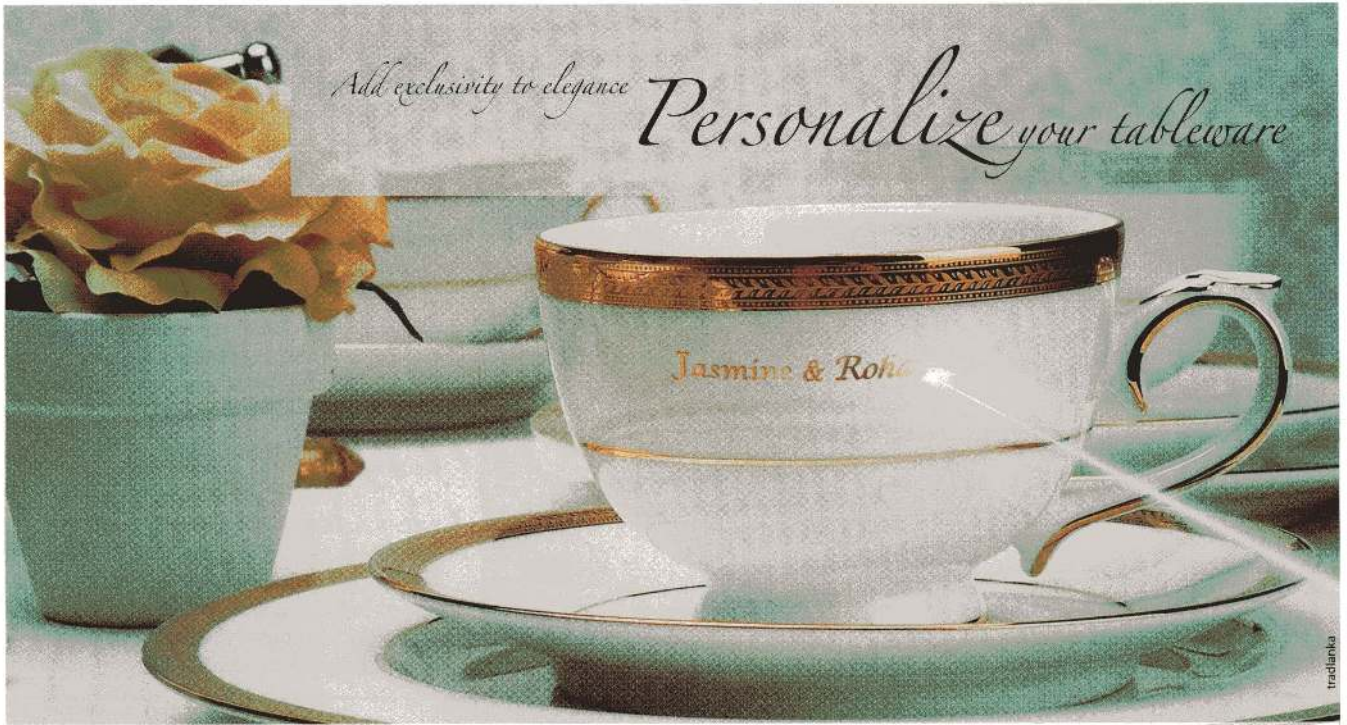
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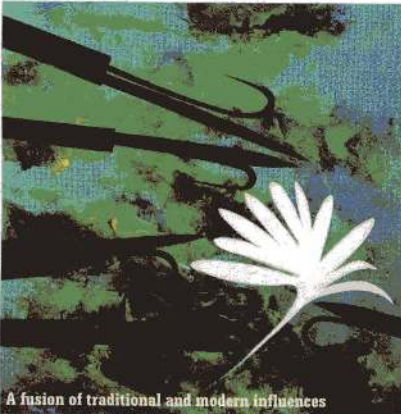
Chamila Gamage exhibits his art



Chamila Gamage with his painting "Your Profile I" in the background

An exhibition of paintings titled 'Social Network' was held at Paradise Road Galleries by artist Chamila Gamage. Working with acrylics, oils and mixed media, this was the artist's fourth solo exhibition. Hailing from the Hambantota District, Gamage initially put to use his artistic talents creating pandols, temple paintings, woodcarvings, bridal 'poruwas' and designs for banners. Moving to Colombo during the 1990s, Gamage joined the Vibhavi Academy of Fine Art, where he honed his natural talent. His latest exhibition explored the concept of social networking through art.

An exhibition of paintings by Chaminda Gamage



A fusion of traditional and modern influences

Chaminda Gamage, a founder member of Colombo Artists, is currently showcasing an array of paintings and installations, in an exhibition at the Barefoot Gallery in Colombo. The paintings exhibit a fusion of the modern and traditional influences in society. They are both symbolic and ambiguous, and hence left to the interpretation and imagination of the viewer.

Speaking about the paintings, Gamage said, "The sun, moon, trees and people in my paintings are flat representations. Our traditions, norms and customs have been overtaken by modern technology and consumerism, resulting in everything being one dimensional and flat."

Bay Leaf gets a facelift



The Bay Leaf restaurant

Bay Leaf Italian restaurant launched its refurbished Restaurant and 'Retro Bar' as well as a new menu. Polished teak wood furniture and warm earthy colours allow the restaurant to retain its colonial charm. Three rooms on the upper level of the restaurant were themed red, blue and yellow creating an ideal ambiance for special occasions. The Retro Bar received a brand new vibrant look with special LED lighting effects. The LED lighting creates varying moods in the atmosphere blending with the background music.

Chef Saroj has revised the Bay Leaf menu with a number of new dishes adding to the delicious flavours of the food served at the restaurant. The new extensive Italian menu includes a range of Anti Pasti dishes, Salads, Soups and main courses offering Fettuccine, Tagliatelle Spaghetti, and Ravioli dishes along with grilled meat and seafood. The desert selection offers 14 traditional Italian favourites such as Pannacotta, Tiramisu, and Zabaglione to Peaches and cream, Pavlova, Orange lime crepes and Amaretto nougat cheese soufflé.

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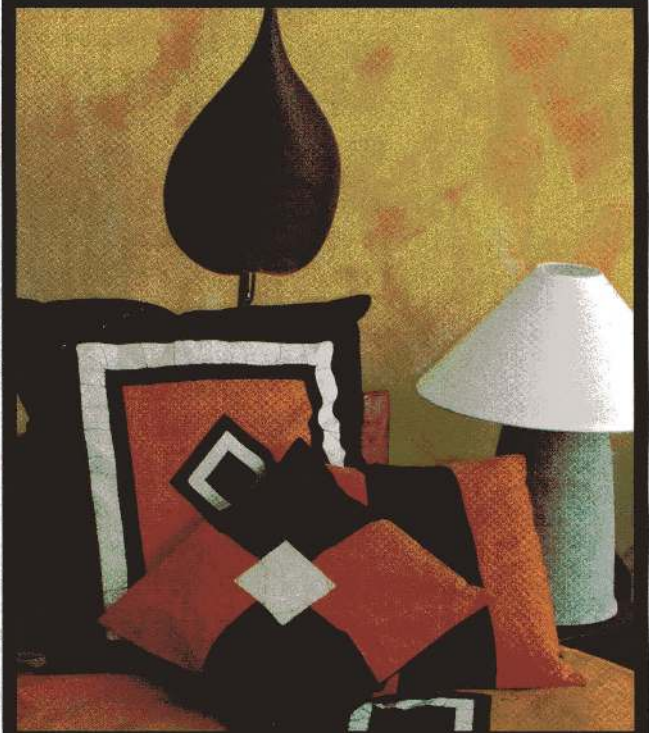


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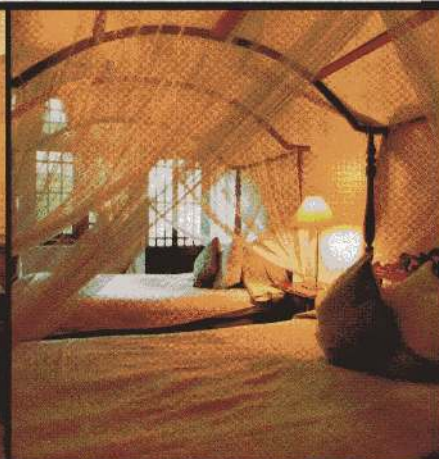
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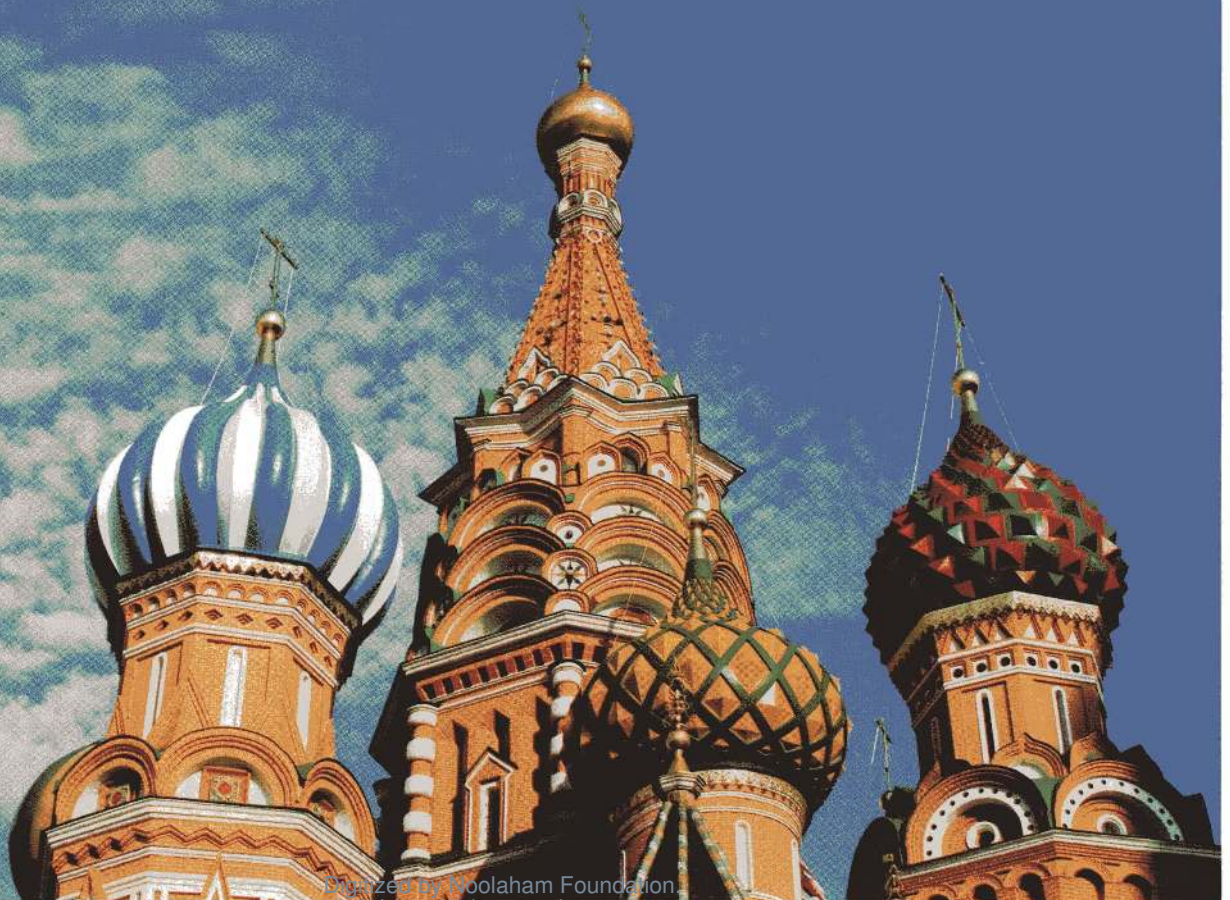


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ODEL Mount Lavinia opens 'Delight' section



Otara Gunewardene opens the Delight department



The specially designed 'O' cupcakes



Items at the new section

ODEL's Delight department has opened at the Mount Lavinia store of the brand, to appease the sweet cravings of shoppers.

A range of sweets including chocolates, biscuits and homemade items will feature at the new Delight section at the Mount Lavinia store. These include gummies, sour tapes, jelly beans, tablet candies, nuts, dried fruit and seeds, milk toffees, brownies, cupcakes, Belgian

and other international chocolates from Guylian, Ritter Sport and Hamlet.

An "O" cupcake, especially designed to commemorate the birthday of Otara Gunewardene, founder and CEO of ODEL, which coincided with the opening of the Delight section, was also launched at the event. The new Delight section was ceremonially opened by Otara Gunewardene.

Niluka Safari services offer more facilities



Restaurant Athgira

Niluka Safari services, which have been in the business of providing safari vehicles for years, now offer luxury safari vehicles as well as standard safari vehicles. Located directly opposite the Udawalawe Elephant Transit Home, restaurant Athgira offers Sri Lankan cuisine as well as a few international dishes for its clientele. Chefs at Athgira

handpick fresh vegetables and meat to create dishes carefully combining those with imported spices and seasonings. Niluka Safari services also offer accommodation facilities at the Hasthiya bungalow just 15 minutes away from the Udawalawe National Park. The bungalow comprises of a large bedroom with four beds and a dormitory with eight beds.

Ayura launches its jewellery collection



Some of the pieces of jewellery on display at the launch



Ayura, creator of exquisite jewellery, recently launched its collection of unique designs of unmatched quality. The jewellery includes bold, contemporary designs as well as delicately crafted classic pieces. Ayura is also a gemstone company, which means it produces polished sapphires from mines around the world. Other precious stones like diamonds, emeralds and rubies are also used in the jewellery. Some of the more uncommon types of stones that Ayura incorporates in its pieces are spinels, tsavorites and spheens.

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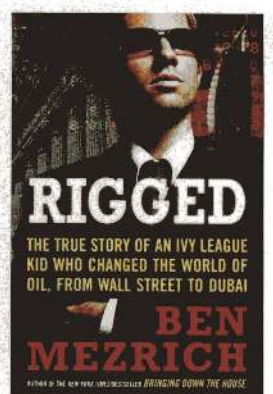
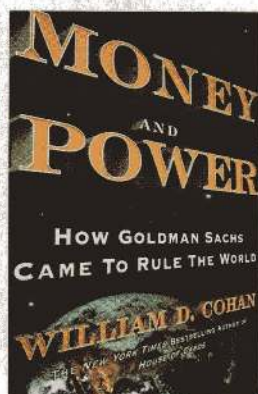
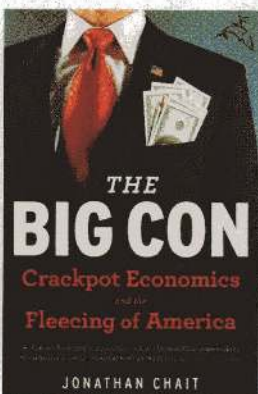
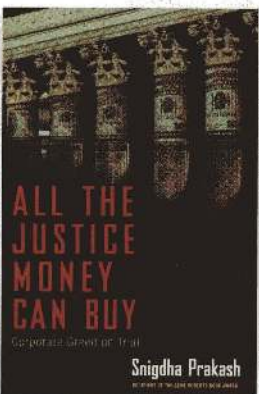
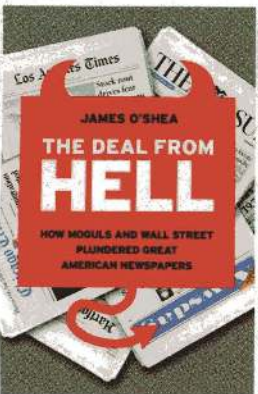
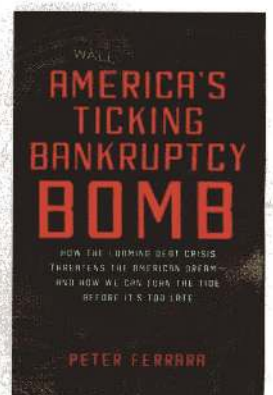
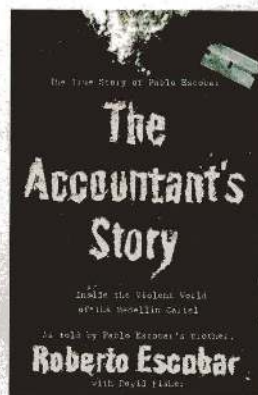
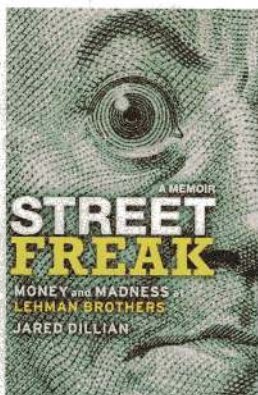
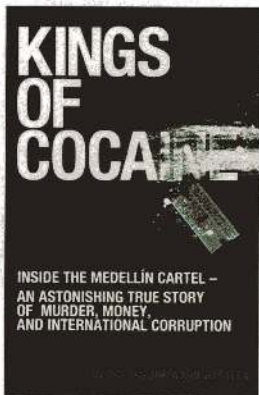
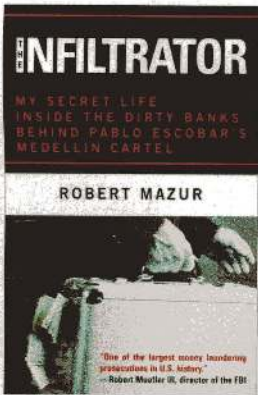
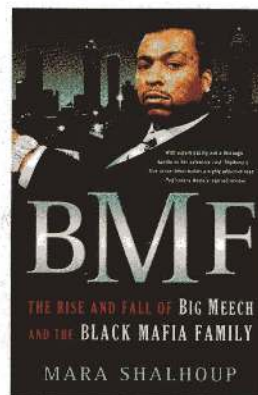
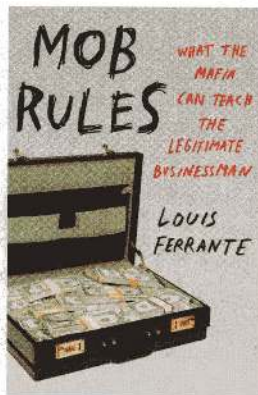
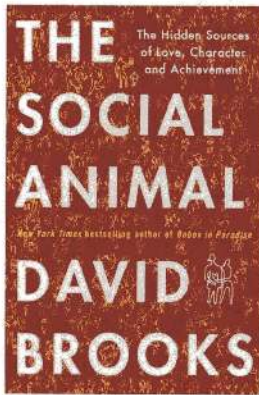


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Calvin Klein unveils a unique collection

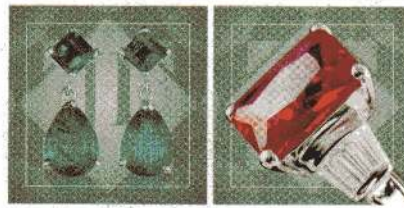


Calvin Klein unveiled a new collection, ck city, ck strive and ck stylish. The ck city design is an understated and elegant watch that celebrates the sophistication of minimalism, while making a sleek statement. Designed for men, but equally suitable on a woman's wrist, the domed mineral glass face features superluminova hour and minute hands which subtly illuminate in the dark for convenience.

Inspired by the goals and challenges of the athletic and business worlds, ck strive is a luminous watch with a polished stainless steel pink gold PVD case and mineral glass, in a silver sunray and circular dial.

The ck stylish range is inspired by modern architecture that creates a bold declaration. Precise and strong lines play with proportions of varying volume and unconventional pattern. The flat slightly domed surface of the closed hinged bangle fluctuates in width from 35mm to 22mm. Imitating the same varying proportions, the earrings increase to 11.4mm as they drop from the slender earring post. Completing the offering is the ring, which is similar in design to the bangle. Each piece in the group is finished with a discrete Calvin Klein logo on its exterior. All of these pieces are available at W A De Silva.

Jewel Laurel now caters to its Canadian customers



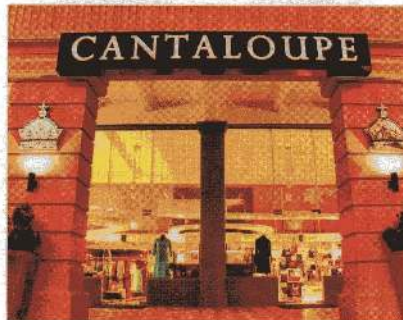
Two of the pieces from Jewel Laurel's collection

Staying true to its corporate vision, Jewel Laurel recently expanded the organisation's international network to Canada. With the recent launch of Jewel Laurel Canada, along with its very own official website, Jewel Laurel now caters to an integral

component of its global customer base in Calgary and Toronto.

Speaking at a press conference to promote Jewel Laurel - Canada, A D A Jawzi, Jewel Laurel's Managing Director said, "Customer satisfaction being our prime focus, we utilise the most professional standards presently practiced in the global arena. We regularly brainstorm ideas to arrive at exquisite new designs with regards to our jewellery range and to find creative and innovative ways by which to improve our existing portfolio."

Cantaloupe expands its retail and hospitality operations



The facade of Cantaloupe Boutique

Retail operations at Cantaloupe Boutique will be expanded by freeing up an additional 2000 square feet of floor space at its Galle Face Court I premises. Cantaloupe has signed up with over 20 leading retailers and hopes to re-launch in November. Parfumerie, Buddhi Batiks, Arugambay, Stringhopper, Linen and Life, Conscience, Spice Island, Cantaloupe Jewels and Ayura are a few of the retailers that have signed up.

Cantaloupe AQUA, Cantaloupe's 16-room boutique hotel will prepare for the season and the opening of the Southern Highway with the launch of COCO-nut restaurant and AQUA Beach Club. Cantaloupe Villas will soon announce the acquisition of two new beach properties under the AQUA brand.

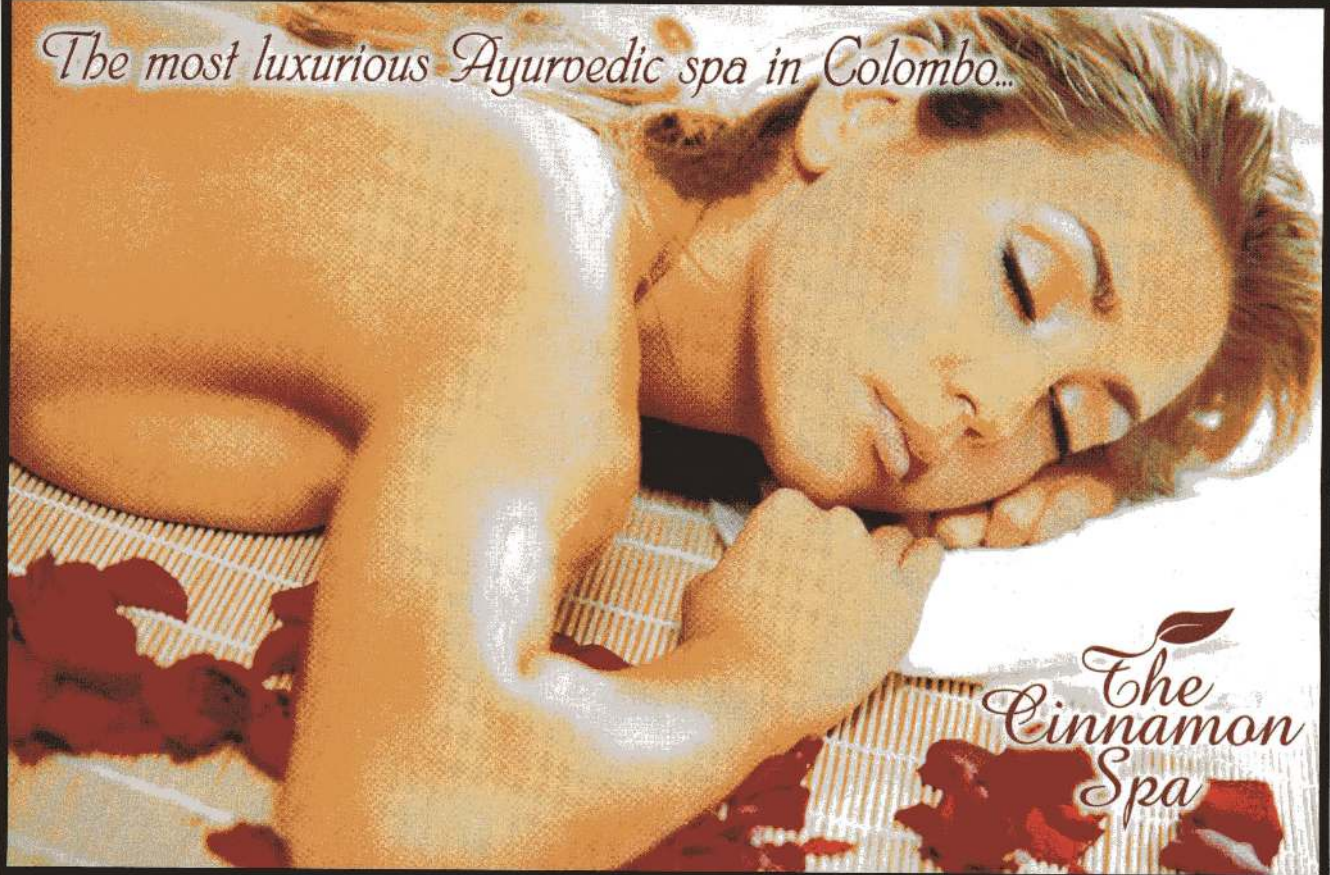
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Almas Fashions specialises in tailoring suits of a high quality. Catering to a diverse market, Almas Fashions also offers a range of fabrics including Italian, English and Irish fabric. Observing the need for a high quality tailoring service in the country that maintains a good standard, Almas Fashions prides itself on its reputation for delivering a quality product. Emphasising that Almas functions as fashion consultants, Ruzly Shamsudeen, Director/CEO of Almas Fashions said, "We don't compromise on standards. We cater to the demand of the clientele and accommodate their requirement. Our success is having satisfied customers who promote our business. We strive to offer a highly professional, efficient and customer friendly service."

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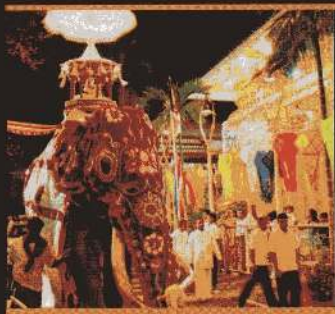
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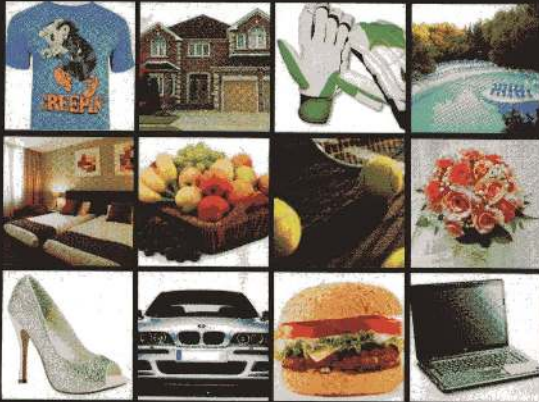
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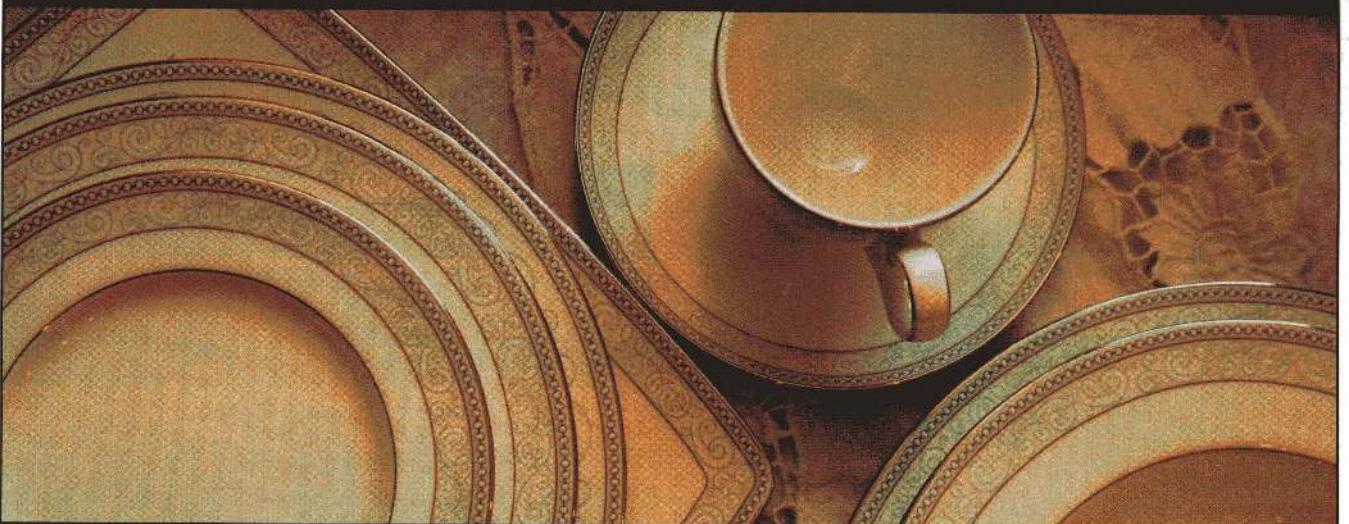
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(L-R) Errol Moraes, Finance Director, Autogrill Lanka (ALL), Mahinda Jayawardana (Monthly Winner), Nanda Nair, Director (ALL), Asanga Weerasinghe (Grand Winner), Amila Amarakoon (Monthly Winner), Malith Fonseka (Monthly Winner) and Chaminda Weerathunga, Marketing Manager (ALL), at the presentation ceremony

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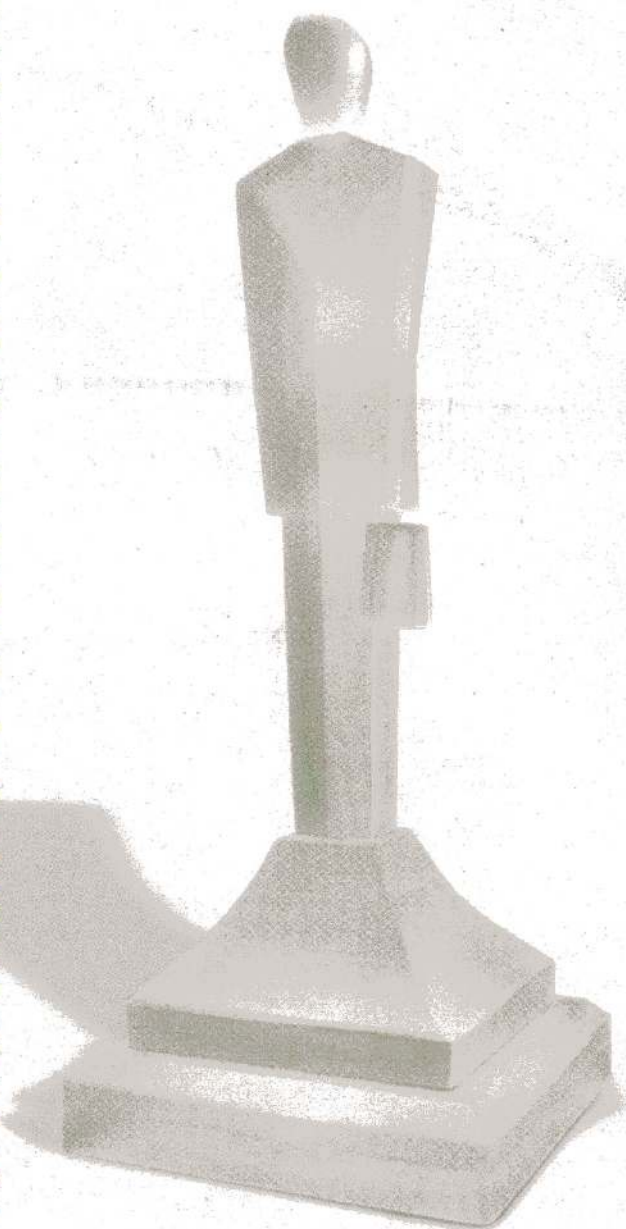
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Business Today

TOP TWENTY

2010-2011

01 JOHN KEELLS HOLDINGS	17.600
02 DISTILLERIES COMPANY OF SRI LANKA	15.500
03 COMMERCIAL BANK OF CEYLON	15.400
04 BUKIT DARAH	13.650
05 HATTON NATIONAL BANK	13.450
06 DIALOG AXIATA	12.950
07 SRI LANKA TELECOM	12.750
08 LANKA ORIX LEASING COMPANY	12.700
09 DFCC BANK	10.850
10 SAMPATH BANK	10.350
11 AITKEN SPENCE	9.450
12 DIESEL & MOTOR ENGINEERING	9.400
13 RICHARD PIERIS	8.250
14 HAYLEYS	7.100
15 COLOMBO DOCKYARD	7.050
16 NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	6.400
17 CARGILLS (CEYLON)	5.850
18 HEMAS HOLDINGS	4.250
19 CHEVRON LUBRICANTS LANKA	4.200
20 SEYLAN BANK	3.500



businesstoday.lk



Essence

Bountiful Seasons

Of the two paddy cultivation seasons, Yala and Maha, the second is upon us. The Maha season arrives with the North-east monsoon and prevails through to March of the following year. Each season heralds much activity among the farmer communities island-wide and along the scenic routes, sights of womenfolk bent in rhythmic sowing of young seedlings that give rise to lush paddy fields hint at the many rituals surrounding an entire livelihood.



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