

TRAVEL TALK Asia

#1 IN CIRCULATION & READERSHIP - SRI LANKA'S ONLY TRAVEL TRADE MONTHLY

VOL 22 NO 03 2023 64 PGS



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Jetwing Hotels, Sri Lanka's Premier Hospitality Brand, Celebrates its Golden Jubilee

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA



Today a trusted, household name in hospitality, Jetwing Hotels is a pioneering force in the travel and tourism landscape of Sri Lanka that began life as a humble, six-bedroomed property on the beach of Negombo. Renowned for their warm, welcoming, authentically Sri Lankan hospitality, spaces that blend with the natural world, and heartfelt commitment to sustainability, Jetwing Hotels celebrated its 50th anniversary on the 27th of January at the resort where the journey started – Jetwing Blue. The event was attended by dignitaries and senior stakeholders in travel and tourism. The celebration was graced by Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Hon. Harin Fernando, Minister for Tourism and Lands, as well as Her Excellency, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge, former president of Sri Lanka.

The story of Jetwing starts with Herbert Cooray, an enterprising building contractor who identified the potential Sri Lanka had for tourism, the island people's inherent warmth and friendliness juxtaposing with boundless natural, historic, and cultural wonder. While building the beachside Seashells Hotel (Jetwing Sea) for G.E.B. Milhuissen in 1972, Herbert was encouraged to construct his own hotel by Göran Olsson of Vingressor and started to build a property of his own just south of Seashells Hotel – the iconic Blue Oceanic Beach Hotel (Jetwing Blue).

The Blue Oceanic Beach Hotel opened its doors in 1973, welcoming tourists from all over the world to the incredible beach at Negombo and to the iconic style of hospitality that would distinguish the brand. The beginnings of Jetwing and the life of its founder was reminisced at the event by a panel consisting of Hiran

Cooray, Chairman of Jetwing Symphony PLC and Shiromal Cooray, Chairman of Jetwing Hotels and Chairman and Managing Director of Jetwing Travels, and children of Herbert. They were joined onstage by Ruan Samarasinghe, Managing Director of Jetwing Hotels whose 50 years of service to the company was felicitated by the team, and Sam Weihsan, former interim CEO of Thomas Cook Group and lifelong friend of Herbert.

"When my father started Blue Oceanic Beach Hotel, tourism in Sri Lanka was largely dominated by tour operators. Hotels would open and close based on the seasons in the northern hemisphere. What my father envisioned was a hotel that could cater to Sri Lankans and foreigners alike, a brand that would be a source of pride and inclusivity for local communities – and I am happy that we have managed to carry on his legacy and vision throughout 50 years," said Shiromal Cooray.

Over the years Jetwing Hotels added to their ever-growing portfolio of resorts and villas, acquiring Seashells Hotel from the retiring Milhuissen in 1978 and the legendary Blue Lagoon (Jetwing Lagoon), famed architect Geoffrey Bawa's first purpose-built resort. The brand soon grew beyond the shores of Negombo, opening iconic properties in Galle (Jetwing Lighthouse, another masterpiece of Bawa) and Nuwara Eliya (Jetwing St. Andrew's).

The company's pioneering spirit, tenacity, and timeless vision came to fore in 2006 with the construction of Jetwing Vil Uyana, one of the most ambitious hospitality projects ever attempted in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka Tourism set to take the stage at the world's largest international travel exchange in Berlin

Industry stake holder's positive on tourism recovery

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

Sri Lanka Tourism together with the national carrier Sri Lankan airlines and over 60 industry stake holders are set to take the stage at the world's largest tourism trade show – ITB Berlin 2023 at Messe Berlin, Germany.

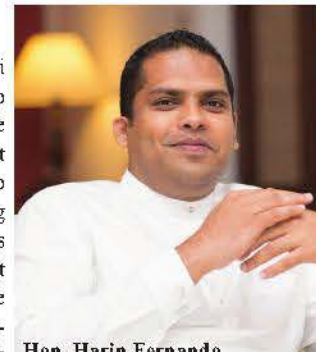
"The tourism sector in Sri Lanka is on the path to recovery and having the ability to showcase the best of what our country has to offer at the world's leading travel show, ITB Berlin is the ideal platform to boost arrivals and create more awareness among consumers that Sri Lanka is safe and ready to welcome visitors from around the world" said Hon. Harin Fernando, Minister of Tourism and Lands.

A large contingent of private sector stakeholders together with the national carrier are working closely to ensure that tourism recovery is priority as the tourism industry is a catalyst in the country's economic revival. The tourism sector contributes to Sri Lanka's growth and development while providing employment to almost 2 million people both directly and indirectly.

At a recent forum to encourage Southern province hoteliers on the government's support to the revival of tourism, the H E The President reiterated the importance to resuscitating the tourism sector while ensuring the members of the industry that tourism recovery remains top priority in the overall agenda.

"Plans are in place to make Sri Lanka a year-round tourist destination and H.E. The President acknowledges the challenges faced by the industry due to the unprecedented economic downturn. Hence a strategic plan is in the pipeline to aid recovery and reach our annual estimated visitor arrivals target of 1.5 million tourists for this year" added the Hon. Minister

Sri Lanka needs positive exposure and platforms such as ITB Berlin affords the destination the ability to showcase the best of the island's products and services to both the trade and the consumers in one of its key tourism generating markets.



Hon. Harin Fernando

"It is encouraging to note that Sri Lanka has been featured in leading international publications in the recent past with a string of accolades and affirmations as being a must visit destination. However, we need to

keep this trend going and ensure that positive publicity continues globally to ensure top of mind recall among travelers in all markets across the globe".

Sri Lanka Tourism recorded over 150,000 arrivals from Jan 1st to 15th February which is very encouraging. Russia tops the list of inbound visitors followed by India, the UK, Germany and France. Europe continues to remain a key source market and increased connectivity will further strengthen travel patterns with an inevitable increase in 2023.

The country is also set to receive its first group of post-pandemic visitors from China in the coming weeks as Sri Lanka is one of the first 20 countries to resume group traffic since China opened its borders for International travel.

With the preparations underway to launch the much-awaited tourism promotion campaign focusing on the identified nine key markets, the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotions Bureau (SLTPB) has commenced work on rolling out a campaign to strengthen Sri Lanka's brand identity

In addition, the SLTPB together with the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) is spearheading efforts to come up with a 10-year blueprint for the tourism sector.

Cont on Pg 2

TRAVEL TALK

Asia

The Tourism industry is gearing up for the world's largest international travel trade show ITB Berlin 2023. Sri Lanka Tourism together with the National carrier SriLankan Airlines and over 60 industry members will take the stage to showcase the best of Sri Lanka's tourism offering to both the German travel trade partners and consumers.

Germany remains a key tourism generating market for Sri Lanka and traditionally has been for over 60 years. A campaign to strengthen consumer awareness will yield a higher number of German visitors in 2023 and plans are underway to launch a digital consumer campaign in Q2.

The way in which the world does business has changed since the onset of the pandemic and the tourism industry is a sector which has had to re-structure business modules and best practices to ensure the sustainability.

The UNWTO statistics indicate that 2023 is the year for global recovery in terms of tourism however the sector faces economic, health and geopolitical challenges. The recent lifting of COVID-19 related travel restrictions in China, which was the world's largest outbound travel market in 2019, is a big step in terms of tourism growth. Asia in particular will see a significant increase in tourism numbers along with the Pacific and worldwide.

Sri Lankan airlines will re-commence passenger operations to three key cities in China in the coming months and the resurgence of Chinese visitors will enhance the overall arrivals to the country.

The global airline industry is facing its own set of challenges and the latest evolution in the Russian offensive in Ukraine continues to hamper with the demand for travel. Connectivity is the key to tourism growth.

Despite the hurdles, tourism worldwide has seen a growth and Sri Lanka in particular is looking to launch a strategic marketing campaign to drive growth and demand. Working with our traditional markets is the initial step towards recovery with the aim to commence active promotional campaigns in emerging markets by the end of the year.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish the tourism industry much success at the upcoming ITB in Berlin and look forward to creating more awareness that Sri Lanka is undoubtedly one of the best locations for visitors wanting an authentic holiday experience coupled with the highest levels of service standards and hospitality in South Asia.



Dinushka

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NEWS

Contd from Pg 1

Jetwing Hotels, Sri Lanka's Premier...

The man-made lakes, forests, and marshes of the hotel interspersed with consciously designed dwellings signal yet another virtue of Jetwing. One that has been a mainstay of their operations, design, and concept since the inception – the commitment to sustainability.

"Hospitality cannot and should not operate isolated from the local communities and without regard to the environment, that is something my father strongly believed," said Hiran Cooray. "Although sustainability wasn't a buzzword back in 1973, the ethos and operations of Jetwing Hotels was built on the principles and tenets that is now considered responsible travel. My father always included the community and the environment in his plans and operated through the years with integrity and trust."

Post-2009, Jetwing Hotels saw an unprecedented period of growth as tourism in the island boomed. While landmark resorts were created in sought-after tourist locations such as Yala and Dambulla, the brand's sense of adventure and discovery saw the introduction of tourism and its benefits to regions of the country that were largely ignored by others. In Wellawaya, Jetwing Kaduruketha pioneered agro-tourism in Sri Lanka with its 50-acre heirloom paddy fields while Pottuvil welcomed Jetwing Surf, unlocking enigmatic east coast to intrepid travellers.

Hon. Harin Fernando speaking at the event as the guest of honour congratulated the Jetwing family on its golden jubilee. "Jetwing's contribution to the travel and tourism industry and the global positioning of Sri Lanka is



immense. The work began by Herbert Cooray and carried on today by his son and daughter has brought tourism to the mainstream and shared its benefits with the community."

In his address to the gathering, Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena spoke on the importance of tourism to the economy of Sri Lanka, now more than ever. "As a dollar earning industry, tourism is a key player in our recovery efforts. In the future, we predict that Asian giants will take a significant share of our arrivals and we look to productive partnerships between public and private sector organisations such as Jetwing Hotels to maximize the tourism potential of Sri Lanka."

The event concluded with cocktails and dinner, and a networking session amongst invitees.

Family owned and in the tourism industry for 50 years, Jetwing Hotels has surpassed expectation at every aspect. Building on their foundation of being passionate, as well as the experience of true, traditional Sri Lankan hospitality, constantly pioneering discoveries captures the essence of the brand. Such a strong statement and direction have enabled Jetwing Hotels to imagine, create and manage marvels and masterpieces, where distinctive design and elegant comfort complement each other and the environment. In line with the Jetwing Hotels Sustainable Strategy, across all properties sustainable and responsible practices are given precedence with resource efficiency, community upliftment and education, and awareness being some of our key focus areas.

Connaissance De Ceylan, Travel Design by CDC, and Thema Collection join hands with Ark Travels Group to strengthen their presence in India's Booming Tourism Market

TTA BULLETIN

Connaissance De Ceylan, Travel Design by CDC and Thema Collection, two highly respected destination management companies in the travel industry and a leading hospitality brand in Sri Lanka, are delighted to announce their collaboration with Ark Travels Group and the appointment of Ms. Anjum Lokhandwala as their representative in India.

The signing of the agreement took place at the recently concluded SATTE event in Delhi, India. This strategic partnership aims to increase the visibility and appeal of Sri Lanka as a preferred tourist destination in India.

Anjum Lokhandwala, Director of Ark Travels Group, has been tasked with marketing the products and services of Connaissance De Ceylan, Travel Design by CDC and Thema Collection in India. She brings with her a wealth of experience and expertise in the travel and tourism industry and is excited about the new partnership.

"Ark Travels Group is extremely elated with their association with such a prestigious brand and looks forward to servicing them and making it a success story for both companies", said Ms. Anjum, Director of Ark Reps.

"We are confident that this collaboration will help us to promote and better serve the booming Indian market and further strengthen our position as leading destination management companies / hospitality brand in Sri Lanka," said Mr. Wickramasinghe, Chairman of Connaissance de Ceylan, Travel Design by CDC and Thema Collection.

The partnership with Ark Travels Group and the appointment of Anjum Lokhandwala is a significant step for Connaissance de Ceylan, Travel Design by CDC and Thema Collection in expanding their reach and tapping into the growing Indian tourism market.



The companies are optimistic that this collaboration will bring mutual benefits and look forward to a successful partnership.



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Sri Lanka's Tourism sector remains positive on Industry Recovery

TTA BULLETIN

The industry stakeholders remain positive that Sri Lanka tourism is on the path to recovery. Having the ability to highlight the destination's prime products and services to the world at ITB Berlin will propel renewed confidence and drive bookings from one of the country's key tourism generating source markets. Commenting on the recovery process and the importance of the German traveler, industry forerunners shared their thoughts on market recovery

M. Shanthikumar
President THASL
Operations Director Ramada Colombo



As the head of The Hotels Association in Sri Lanka better known as THASL I am happy to state that Sri Lanka has made successful

progress in Tourism growth since the challenges we faced in 2022. Tourism in our island nation has been clearly identified as a thrust industry and the Government supports the steps towards the steep growth targets the private sector has set.

The industry is totally private sector driven and over the past years many new off the beaten track locations have opened up for Tourism. The nature, culture, adventure, wildlife and beaches with an experience of different temperatures within a short period provides holiday travelers much enjoyment. Unlike in the past the use of public transport such as the new train service to the north or the east offering utmost comfort is now on offer. The development of 'Pekoe trails' with a walk amidst some of the most beautiful plantations, nature reserves, water falls, the development of "Glamping in Galoya" where nature's beauty combined with unusual sites of the swimming elephants at the Senanayake Samudraya etc are some very unique products developed in the very recent past.

There is no better time to visit Sri Lanka than now! As in the past, Sri Lanka is now receiving the recommendations from International publications as a 'must visit destination'.

Visitors from Germany and Europe have been an important market for Tourism in the country since its inception. We would like to see more Europeans visit the nation once again to explore what they have not seen before.

Nalin Jayasundera
Managing Director
Aitken Spence Travels

"From the very inception of the formal tourism sector development in Sri Lanka, the German market has played a vital role in generating tourist arrivals from Western Europe to the destination. The finest beaches, rich culture, nature, adventure and the genuinely friendly hospitality have



Nalin Jayasundera

generated a demand for Sri Lanka as one of the most preferred destinations in Asia in the German market. Ayurveda and wellness that Sri Lanka

offers is much sought-after by the German travelers. They love the compactness of the destination and the variety it offers. The authentic experiences make Sri Lanka one of the most preferred destinations among the German travelers.

Commenting on the challenges and opportunities Jayasundera said "Sri Lanka had a triple blow since 2019 which resulted in decline in arrivals from the German market. The travel advisory did not encourage the German tour operators to focus on Sri Lanka. However, we have observed a month on month growth from the German market and we expect the positive trend to continue. 2023 is expected to be the year of revival after 3 years. In order to increase the arrivals from the German market, it is important to carry out a consumer targeted promotional campaign using social media. Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau is planning to launch a campaign in the 2nd quarter of the calendar year 2023 by inviting over 100 bloggers/influencers and media. In addition, it is extremely important to work together with the tour operators who have the knowledge of the market with the reach to the customer base and get their support to promote the destination over our competing destinations

All the stakeholders lead by the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau should work together to create a positive perception regarding Sri Lanka as there has been many negative messages that have gone to the market since 2019.

In 2022, many competing destinations in Asia have opened up for the German traveler. In addition, we have to take into consideration the fact that there is high inflation in the European source markets. Therefore, we need to offer an attractive product at a competitive price. The Germany has the potential to grow and become one of our most important source markets for Sri Lanka Tourism"

Hiran Cooray
Chairman
Jetwing Symphony PLC



Hiran Cooray

"We have noticed a developing trend in the German market, where like in some other countries, the experienced

travelers are beginning to travel more independently for long-haul holidays.

We as suppliers have to take notice of that and be ready to serve those who book through our valued tour operators as well as those who travel independently. Consumer-focused communications are essential and will play a vital role in this market that has supported us in both good and bad times."

Devindre Senaratne
Chairman Journeyscapes Travel
Sigiriya Jungles
Past President SLAITO



We are very happy to be at ITB this year after 3 years, to meet our German travel partners to renew our friendships and commence our usual promotions for the benefit of the tourism industry.

German travelers and the German tour operators have done a major role and a remarkable support every year. 45% of our hotel inventories in the leisure sector are beach resorts and majority of the occupancies were from Germany up to 2019.

Over 25% of our German travelers are repeaters that shows how uniquely we are positioned ourselves as a tourist destination for Germany and that's why Sri Lanka is a highly rated country to visit on the long-haul travel. Even in the absence of continued consumer promotions, thanks to the repeaters and enthusiastic travel operators we had a high demand right throughout the year from the German market.

Germany has supported Sri Lanka Tourism since 1960s. This is evident as there are many who speak the German language and taken professional responsibilities like travel consultants, tourist guides, etc., In addition, there are many suppliers for the hotel and travel industry in the popular tourism beach destinations where they operate souvenirs shops, transport, restaurants etc.,

Fortunately, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotions Bureau on a priority basis is making plans to strategically appoint an International PR and advertising company for consumer awareness and promotions to rebuild the occupancies we enjoyed in the past and to develop and attract new markets like luxury travel, Ayurveda travel, adventure travel and water based sports etc., Promotions are valued by us and German Tour operators as returns could be fast due to the country awareness and access. Whilst Sri Lanka flies direct to Frankfurt over 3 times a week Qatar Airways, Emirates, Etihad, etc., flies to many cities in Germany daily.

We are very excited to be a part to these new opportunities.

Shiromal Cooray
Chairman
Jetwing Hotels / Jetwing Travels



Shiromal Cooray

Germany has been and continues to be an important market for Sri Lanka for many reasons. We see the trend of travel being all year around as

opposed to seasonal and with the traveler demographic ranging from the very young to the more mature traveler. Over 50% of the German travelers embark on tours around the country, giving business to multiple hotels around Sri Lanka. This is also very beneficial to the tour guides and support services in the industry. The German market has aided people to enhance their Entrepreneurial skills and remain committed to doing business with their partners sans embarking on business on their own.

Sri Lanka's presence at the upcoming ITB in Berlin will undoubtedly be a reassuring exercise that the country is safe for travel and that we are fully open and ready to welcome travelers to our beautiful island.

Chandra Wickramasinghe
Chairman
Connaissances De Ceylan



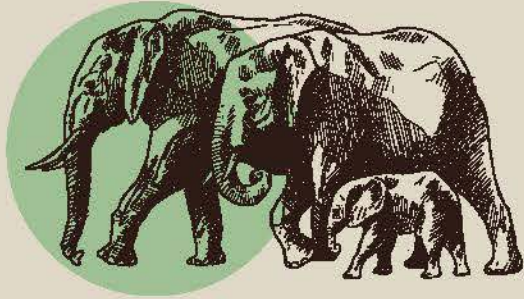
Chandra Wickramasinghe

Germany has over the years been one of Sri Lanka's top source markets with clientele preferring mostly beach stays or

health/wellness Ayurveda holidays.

With the last couple of years arrivals have considerably slowed down, however we should work towards reestablishing our relations to the former levels. Firstly, we will have to convince the German Authorities to the clear the image of Sri Lanka and send across the message of conducive business environment for tourism, prevailing in the country. This can be done with testimonials from German clients who are already in the country enjoying the Ayurveda sharing their 1st hand experience and also with social media campaigns utilizing travel influencers, bloggers etc.

highlighting Sri Lanka's experience-based tourism such as Ayurveda, Wildlife, Nature based tour such as ornithology. The availability of direct flights to & from Germany creates a conducive environment for traveling allowing German travelers more opportunity to travel with ease.



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INDUSTRY LEADERS / NEWS

Champika De Silva

Area Director of Sales
Ananlara Peace Haven Tangalle / Ananlara Kalulura Resort



Champika De Silva

German Market will remain a key feeder market to our resorts. It is important to reaffirm that the country is ready to welcome visitors and can provide all

facilities, services, and the environment for guests to have an unforgettable stay in Sri Lanka. It is heartening to see an increase in visitors from Germany within the few European visitors to our resorts.

We look forward to connecting with our main partners and jointly brainstorming on best practices to generate more volume from the German Market.

Suranjith De Fonseka

Managing Director
Diethelm Travel Sri Lanka & The Maldives



Suranjith De Fonseka

"Germany has been one of the most important source markets for Sri Lanka for decades, and it has been the support of the German industry and its travelers that

have helped Sri Lanka through many a difficult time, particularly during our

30-year war. The loyal repeat travelers that have helped sustain this destination over the years have primarily come in from Germany, and most Germans also stay longer than the average travelers to the destination as well.

Sri Lanka Tourism should urgently rollout a PR campaign in Germany (as was done in the UK), bringing in key media and influencers to get the word out about the current status of the destination. We need these positive stories to ensure the market knows that we are a safe destination and that travelers don't have to endure any hardships or challenges when visiting. I also request our German trade partners to support the destination at this time, by using whatever marketing channels at their disposal to share the same message. This can range from their websites and social media platforms to their travel agency shop windows to destination webinars and seminars. I finally call upon our loyal German repeat travelers, who have been our ambassadors, to visit us once again, and to get the word out to your friends that there isn't a better time to visit Sri Lanka than now."

Rohan Karr

Managing Director - Hayleys Leisure.



Rohan Karr

Germany has always been one of our top ten source markets and of great importance for tourism in Sri Lanka. With our country now

back on track, we have seen a rise in tourist arrivals and in January 2023 alone, 8% of travelers represented the German market.

Sri Lanka has been focusing on experiential travel coupled with exceptional hospitality and we have seen the European market too, quite eager to experience this concept. With the many accolades Sri Lanka has received in the last couple of months from leading publications like The Times, CN Traveller and Traveller Australia, to name a few, experiential travel will most certainly lead the way.

Surveys indicate that outbound travel from Germany is expected to surpass the record numbers of pre covid times with over 117.9 million visitors traveling to various countries and I am positive that Sri Lanka will be on most radars.

Nalaka Amaratunga

CEO - Walkers Tours



Nalaka Amaratunga

The German tourism industry is well organized and a key source market of Sri Lanka, remaining as one of the top 5 producing source markets to the country

up to date. Among the European countries, Germany produces the highest number of tourists to long-haul destinations. German agents started producing tourists to Sri Lanka since late 70s and they have been enjoying Sri Lankan beaches as well as local

culture and nature and these experiences are usually covered in round tours. Germans are very keen in wellness - ayurveda and mindfulness, which is one of the main reasons for them to pick Sri Lanka as a must travel destination. German tourists are also adventurous and prefer to explore attractions off the beaten paths. The German market is a key market into Sri Lanka helping all segments of the industry to benefit due to their varied interests touching all elements of the tourism industry.

Chandana Talwatte

Executive Director / CEO
Citrus Leisure



Chandana Talwatte

"The German market remains a very important market for Sri Lanka tourism. The German traveler is familiar with the products and services the destination

has to offer and is among the list of top performing tourism generating markets. Although Sri Lanka has faced many challenges in the recent past, we are confident that tourism will regain some of its lost momentum in the coming months and hope to attract travelers from Europe in a more robust manner.

We look forward to working together with the industry stakeholders in creating more awareness that Sri Lanka is safe and open for business while overcoming setbacks and look forward to a more successful 2023"

Sri Lankan's Unite with Your Reveue Partner

TTA BULLETIN

Your Revenue Partner was born out of the desire to bring to light the "Secrets of Ceylon" - boutique & villa experiences which are not well known. Today 6 months on, we are proud of having brought together over 15 partners to bring over £ 30,000 worth of positive publicity for Sri Lanka and our partners. Secrets of Ceylon partners (including Zylan in Colombo 7, Coffee Bungalow Kandy, Madulkelle Tea & Eco Lodge, and Kalundewa Retreat Dambulla), joined forces with SriLankan Airlines, Movenpick Colombo, Forgotten Colombo, Sail Lanka, Ayubo Teas, Aroma Bliss Spa, Northern Province Tourism Bureau, and The Drunken Lankan (mixologist). There were also specialist guides for the Pekoe Trail provided by Magical Isle and many others.

Four senior UK media visited Sri Lanka and were amazed at how much Sri Lanka had

changed for the good and how normal life is (though more expensive, their foreign currency provides a buffer to this). They were able to experience some favourites, some less know places like The Colombo Rowing Club and experience the delights of Aluth Kade by night thanks to Forgotten Colombo. They visited Colombo, Galle, Kandy and Dambulla and Jaffna, each picking up different angles for different stories.

Gary Noakes' message was "I have been here 5 times, the people are very welcoming, your shouldn't think it is not safe to come here, there are no queues, life is normal and they want you to come back. Sri Lanka needs tourism, so please start booking". Gary writes trade publication TTG UK

Nick Redmayne confirmed saying "It's the

perception that Sri Lanka is not ready for tourism. I have been here a few days and the best thing to do is to come here and spend your money". He wrote for Geographical Magazine and inews

Ellie Seymour who write for Citizen Femme said "I have just been in Sri Lanka for a few days, and I am surprised to see how normal life is here, and how happy everyone is."

Travel Agent Toni Sharp of MTG Holidays Please visited 2 weeks later said "There are so many different and new experiences now including Kalundewa Retreat in Dambulla, and Coffee Bungalow Kandy. I think it is so

important to share Sri Lanka with the world. Go now before it gets massively busy again...it is a gem."



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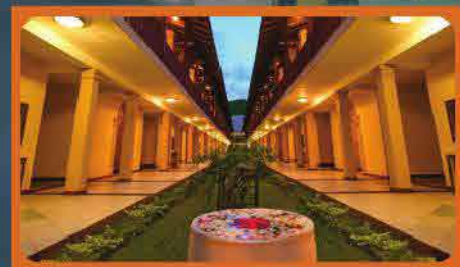


MANDARA ROSEN



Take a journey
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Welcome to Mandara Rosen, the ideal choice amongst Kataragama hotels for your next vacation in Sri Lanka. From the chirping of the birds in the surrounding trees to the welcome drink upon arrival, Mandara Rosen has been designed to offer the ultimate sensory experience. The location, ambience and impeccable service at the hotel promises the discerning traveller a unique travel experience where privacy and intimacy guaranteed.



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Increasing Operational Efficiency in Hospitality Establishments; a Main Focus of Sri Lanka Hospitality Consultants

TTA BULLETIN

Sri Lanka Hospitality Consultants (SLHC) provides consultancy services with insights into local tourism trends with a global perspective. With expert consultants who share their passion for the tourism industry in Sri Lanka, SLHC provides 360-degree hospitality consultancy within the numerous criterions under asset and general management of a hotel.

The company also focuses on all supporting aspects of hospitality management such as sales, revenue and customer retention, marketing, branding, social media management, mystery guest audits, project management, specialized recruitment services, hotel pre-opening and branding projects, events and promotional strategy development.

"Sri Lanka Hospitality Consultants consists of a group of expert hospitality leaders who share a great passion towards the development of the tourism industry in Sri Lanka," said Renuke Coswatte, Chief Executive Officer of SLHC. He went on to state "our

final aim is to uplift the tourism industry by assisting with the operations of a hotel on a consultancy basis, be it for rooms, revenue, housekeeping, F&B or even spa or laundry services. The protection of the assets is guaranteed with maximum returns on investment for the owners by optimizing operating returns and investment returns".

With over 20 years' experience in the tourism market, experts within SLHC has developed valued relationships with travel agents, tour operators, corporate businesses, NGO's, foreign missions in order to bring increased revenue and sales for clients. With their broad market knowledge and generated relationships, SLHC is able to reduce the lead time generating income to clients and pursue timely-managed efforts on sales and revenue.

With the understanding of the importance of a long-term business model, SLHC provides marketing and related services within the right framework in order to increase market

share. This has been proven in past experiences and has limitless examples of success stories. SLHC has a rounded team to provide necessary support and advice pertaining to marketing, PR, branding and social media management aspects of the property as well.

With the propelling challenge in today's hospitality industry of sourcing and retaining qualified staff members, SLHC focuses on providing solutions with special techniques and by checking references and testing candidates' attitude and aptitude which leads to the best possible selection of candidates. Besides recruiting, HR services of SLHC are related to all essential areas of today's industrial world. SLHC offer personal development and soft skills training, team building, customer service and service excellence, certificates on specialization on food safety training, performance management and rewards schemes and employee management system for the client.

SLHC undertakes projects for star class properties as well as independent run operator properties, be it hotels, villas, concept restaurants and other hospitality-related properties our focus is primarily results-driven and work closely with owners to ensure their objectives are achieved to fullest.

"Our team understands the challenges faced in today's fast-paced hospitality environment. Cultural, technological, social, economic environments are rapidly changing which impact profitability, guest satisfaction and business growth. We understand these forces and with a wealth of knowledge and experience is geared to provide best outcomes to our clients with dedication and results focused" said Renuke Coswatte.

For more information, visit www.slhc.lk or call +94 77 90 44 889 for a meeting.

Taj hotels in Sri Lanka remain committed to the promotion and development of tourism in the region

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

The Taj hotels in Sri Lanka are the Indian Hotels Company's (IHCL) iconic star-class brand of hotels in Sri Lanka. Taj Samudra, Colombo, has played host to the world's most discerning travelers for over four decades. Set on a vast expanse of lush, manicured lawns overlooking the iconic Galle face, the Taj Samudra offers its visitors a panoramic view of the Indian ocean coupled with unparalleled levels of service excellence, luxury abode and international cuisine. Likewise, Taj Bentota Resort and Spa is an equally stunning property spread over a vast expanse of a pristine beach that makes a perfect holiday destination for travellers the world over.

Commenting on the Group's commitment to Sri Lanka Tourism, Samrat Datta, Area Director of Taj Hotels Sri Lanka and Maldives, said, "Sri Lanka has always been a very important destination for IHCL and

continues to be so. We are committed to growth and development in this region despite all the challenges that this destination has faced due to the pandemic as well as the recent economic downturn. We at the Taj Hotels have remained resilient and continued to support the destination through constant efforts to drive tourism and MICE movements to Sri Lanka. We have consistently leveraged our strong sales and marketing network pan India, which is one of the key markets for Sri Lanka."

"Taj" brand being rated as World's Strongest Hotel Brand by Brand Finance Hotels 50 Report 2022 is a testament to its journey of excellence. The strong brand promise reassures visitors of the top-notch service standards and quality offerings they can



Samrat Datta

expect when they visit Sri Lanka. We are also focused on corporates, groups and events, which would generate high volumes of traffic to the country. This, together with the numerous special promotions, restaurant pop-ups, musical shows and international affiliations, we are confident that we will be able to make remarkable growth in terms of volumes and business levels, which will positively impact the economy of the country."

Taj's legendary service is known for its warm and sincere care. In Sri Lanka, both Taj Samudra and Taj Bentota offer a perfect blend of South Asian hospitality traditions and best-in-class quality offerings, leaving long-lasting impression on guests.

Commenting on the importance of the German market, Samrat said, "Germany is a primary and very important source market for both Sri Lanka tourism and the Taj hotels. Germans have always loved beautiful Sri Lanka and have appreciated the wide range of offerings this country showcases. We are confident that strategic marketing campaigns and continued promotional efforts to highlight the readiness of Sri Lanka to welcome its guests will result in a remarkable growth of German tourists to Sri Lanka."

If you are looking to explore nature, wildlife, lush green tea plantations, dense forest and nature reserves or lounge on pristine sandy beaches, Sri Lanka has it all. With a myriad of heritage sites, natural wonders and an exquisite array of delectable delicacies, the island is a gem of an experiential travel destination.

Come home to luxury at Ramada by Wyndham Colombo

TTA BULLETIN

The iconic star-class luxury hotel, Ramada Colombo, is owned by the American multinational-World's largest hotel franchise, Wyndham Hotels and Resorts. Located in the heart of the vibrant metropolis Colombo, Ramada provides easy access to city attractions to dine, shop, party, explore, and more.

Designed with the modern traveler in mind, Ramada is home to contemporary Deluxe rooms and Suites that provide a stylishly designed urban escape, a lounge area to unwind, an ergonomically inspired workspace, cozy beds, and sophisticated amenities. The property is adorned with blissful outdoors complemented by the pool's blue waters and the garden's lush greenery, making it a one-of-a-kind paradise in the city.

Ramada Colombo eagerly enrolls guests in the Wyndham Rewards program, which allows you to earn points and redeem them for exclusive benefits from all 9000+ hotels and resorts worldwide.

Ramada is best known for its culinary magic, where the best chefs in the country curate flavorful dishes to entice your taste buds. The hotel has two main restaurants: Gardenia, an all-day dining restaurant serving both local and International cuisine, and Alhambra, the North Indian restaurant led by MasterChef Singh.

Alhambra restaurant holds a five-decade legacy as the first North Indian specialty restaurant in Colombo, perfecting Moghul culinary traditions passed down from the imperial kitchens with a modern twist.

Briyani, Moghul Shashlik, Kebabs, Paneer Butter Masala, Tandoori Chicken, and Rajasthan Laalmas are some of the popular dishes out of the 100+ items on the Alhambra menu.

In addition, the BAKED outlet serves an array of delicious patisserie and cakes rich in taste and texture. Ramada's Oasis Lounge Bar is one of Colombo's hotspots to grab a cold one and enjoy with your favorites. Secret Garden is a must-visit outdoor bar at Ramada, secluded from the bustle if you want to relax and sip a good cocktail or two paired with tongue-tantalizing tapas.

If you are a wellness seeker, you can unwind at Ramada's AYU Balinese Spa. The spa is administered by expert Balinese masseuses and serves a comprehensive menu inclusive

of blissful wellness treatments.

Amidst all the luxurious comforts and the great dining experience Ramada has to offer, the hotel boasts its spectacular banquet spaces. The Liberty Ballroom, an elegant 9000 sq ft area, is one of the city's most loved and spacious banquet halls that entertain grand weddings, award nights, gala dinners, and the city's premium corporate events. Persian Room, Hazel Room, and Think Room are also perfectly designed for seminars, press briefings, business meetings, and even intimate celebrations.





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HOTELS

Clarks Hotels and Resorts Sri Lanka and Maldives

The Clarks Hotels & Resorts embarked on its International journey in Sri Lanka and had its first property tie-up in Sri Lanka being The Albatross Golf Resort in Digana, Kandy by The Clarks in the last quarter of 2022 and is now rapidly extending its presence within the Luxury Boutique Villa Market in Sri Lanka with a few key Luxury Villa Properties in 2023. A couple of Commercial 4 and 5 Star Properties and Safari related properties will soon top the portfolio Hotels, Resorts and Luxury Boutique Villas in Sri Lanka under a few of the many Clarks Hotels & Resorts' 9 BRANDS.

Amazing 18 hole Golf Course with breathtaking views of the surrounding hills and the Victoria reservoir. The property is just a 30 minutes' drive to the Amazing Temple of the Tooth Relic in Kandy and the Pallekelle International Cricket Stadium. If anyone also wishes to fly, a Sea Plane / Amphibious Aircraft does also can land at the Victoria Reservoir. Helicopter Flights are similarly available to fly you to Digana directly where they have two Helipads and it is just only a few minutes' drive to the location.

The Clarks Hotels & Resorts is extending its



Albatross by The Clarks, Sri Lanka



Albatross by The Clarks, Sri Lanka

Therefore the Clarks will strengthen its presence further into the Sri Lankan Market thus promoting Sri Lanka both to the Indian travellers and worldwide travellers which aims to take advantage of the growing Sri Lankan business and leisure travel market. The Clarks Hotels & Resorts will also increase more opportunities for the many of the Indian travellers with a wide selection of The Clarks Hotels within the Sub-Continent with a network of more than 100 properties thus optimizing their presence further in key locations within Sri Lanka by the end of the calendar year 2023.

The Albatross Golf Resort Digana, Kandy by The Clarks, is an upscale property with 8 modern rooms in the popular city of Kandy located in the central hills of Sri Lanka - The rooms are divided into three categories - The Royal Albatross Suite, The Tee off Suite and Deluxe Rooms catering for guests from all over the world. This certainly gives an opportunity for the Indian Travellers to start enjoying Indian and Sri Lankan hospitality with The Clarks Hotels & Resorts.

The property is in close proximity to an

presence in Key Locations in The Western Province with a couple of properties in proximity to the two major International Airports such Colombo, The South Western Coastal belt areas which will include Galle, The Cultural Triangle, The Eastern Part of Sri Lanka, The Central Hills of Sri Lanka such as Kandy and Nuwera-Eliya with its cold climates, The North and North Central area of Sri Lanka in proximity to Key National parks which includes the Cultural and Heritage areas. The Clarks is delighted to enter such a beautiful and amazing country like Sri Lanka - an Island that is abundant in diversity and that is recognized globally as the Pearl of the Indian Ocean.

We at Clarks Hotels & Resorts believe that "As a part of corporate strategy we are expanding both in India and internationally. We are present in almost all the states of India.

We are price conscious and believe in providing value for money to our travelers. This is the best time to be in the tourism industry, with the Sri Lankan government pushing tourism, and the pandemic has changed the attitude towards traveling,



Penthouse with Terrace & 360 Degree View of Ocean

coming months will witness a further increase in tourism. We are also now promoting Sri Lanka and The Maldives as our new international destinations through our global network.

Gabriel Gunsekere - Head Development - Sri Lanka, The Maldives and International is optimistic that The Clarks expansion has created a buzz in the Sri Lankan Market and will further add more properties to The Clarks Hotels & Resorts portfolio in the coming months. By 2025, The Clarks Hotels & Resorts will comprise of over 200 properties within its chain. gabriel@theclarkshotels.com



Gabriel Gunsekere

magnificent, stunning beauty of the island and surrounding reef, the island offers the perfect balance of both.

The Clarks Exotica provides excellent rooms and accommodations including rooms with immaculate views of the ocean. They also have intricately designed penthouses that guarantee premium luxury. All of the accommodations are laced with modern amenities and facilities to ensure your stay is convenient and delightful. The hotel has two exclusive restaurants that offer the best food in town.

The Bridge, is a multi-cuisine restaurant, and has a diverse menu with delicacies borrowed from a variety of cuisines. Pool Deck Lounge, at the lounge area by the outdoor pool, is the perfect place to kick back and relax with a refreshing drink.

During your stay at Clarks Exotica, discover and explore the marine life and lose all sense of time as you venture beneath the ocean's surface to glide alongside turtles and whale sharks-enjoy scuba diving, snorkeling to see a coral garden in a huge fish structure made by the locals here. Hop on to a boat ride and swim with the Gigantic Manta rays at Hanifaru Bay.

Go for morning or night fishing. Take a picnic basket to a remote sandbank or visit a local island and as you come back from your adventurous and tiring day you can dig into the sumptuous round-the-clock menus and relish the traditional taste of Indian, Maldivian and Continental food at the restaurant.

Malinda Ranwala - General Manager Hotel Operations, Sales & Marketing for Sri Lanka & The Maldives believes with the expansion of the Clarks Brand in the Region will offer a Greater potential to the guests with an array of selected brands targeting the Indian travelers and International travelers from around the world as far as the Americas and the Austral Asia Region. malinda@theclarkshotels.com



Malinda Ranwala

The Clarks Exotica Kamadhoo is located in a beautiful community island in the Baa Atoll which is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Anyone can reach the main Airport Island by a domestic flight that just takes 20 minutes from MALÉ - Velaana International Airport and one can reach the property by a speed boat that just only takes approximately about 15 minutes from the domestic airport of Dharavandu to reach the property.

Kamadhoo Island overlooking the Indian Ocean is famous as a yoga retreat destination which is surrounded by the most beautiful beach with white sand all over amidst crystal clear blue water.

Whether you like to kick back, relax and take in the



Penthouse with Terrace & 360 Degree View of Ocean

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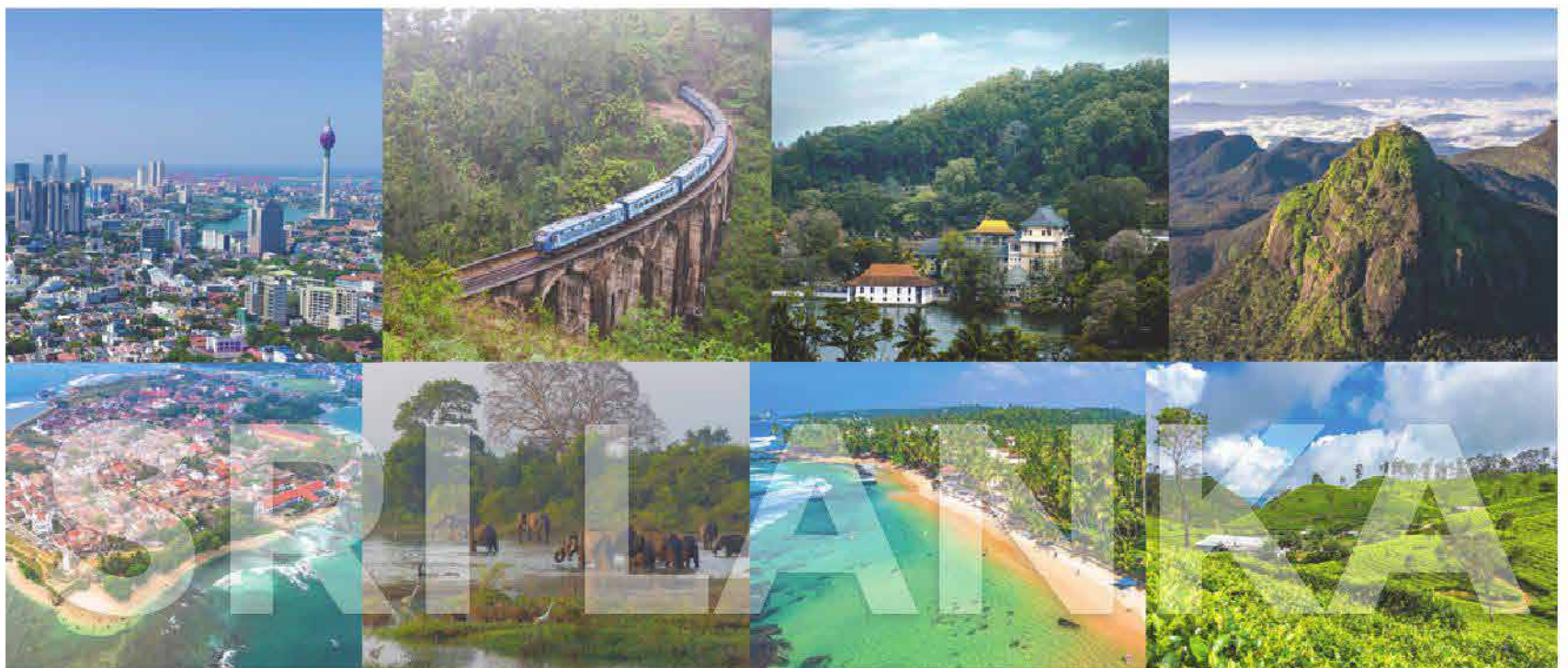
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The Clarks Hotels & Resorts is a complete solutions provider in the hotel management space. We bring not only expertise in helping you set up a hotel and run it, but also of our tremendous brand equity we offer.

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Kamal Munasinghe recognised as Hospitality Sector Business Leader of the Year 2022

TTA BULLETIN

Kamal Munasinghe, Area Vice President Colombo Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts and General Manager, Cinnamon Grand Colombo was recognised as the Hospitality sector Business Leader of the Year at the annual CEO Awards held recently.

The glamorous, black-tie event recognises outstanding business leaders who are game changers in their respective categories. Conceptualised by the CEO Magazine, the awards featured distinguished categories recognising every type of successful executive and transformational business leader.

Veteran hotelier and industry powerhouse Kamal Munasinghe was previously the General Manager for Alila Bangsar Kuala Lumpur (a Hyatt Hotels Corporation property). Munasinghe has nearly three decades of international and local hospitality expertise

in managing luxury hotel brands including several local hotels. Some of his most notable career accomplishments have been the opening of the first-ever Alila in Malaysia; a 410-room refurbishment of the Renaissance Kuala Lumpur; and introducing the Liquid Sky Bar at Renaissance Riverside Saigon, to name a few.

Munasinghe's proven track record of establishing brand consistency and proactively leading, identifying and capitalising on opportunities to drive excellence in operations, enhance financial performance, and growth across the Cinnamon Colombo hotel portfolio, has not only guided teams to deliver exceptional service standards but also to create inspiring moments for guests across the Colombo city. His passion for giving back to communities also led him to spearhead meaningful CSR initiatives that

has now won the PATA Gold Award for Community and Social Responsibility just last year.



"Guided by one of our core values of caring for our people and our communities, Meals that Heal is a project that we were proud to initiate as an effort to make a difference in our communities by helping them recover and rebuild at the most challenging times of our recent past. We will be continuing this initiative as a long-term project and look forward to the support of our customers and guests to strengthen this initiative further".

Munasinghe was first appointed as General Manager of both Cinnamon Grand Colombo

and Cinnamon Lakeside Colombo as a part of the restructuring that took place at Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts post-pandemic. Since then, he has been instrumental in spearheading the transformation of the Colombo properties under the brand. Munasinghe believes in the need to develop a professional hospitality workforce to deliver a memorable experience for guests and allow foreign workforces to be part of the industry, so that we can gain much-needed exposure and certify Sri Lanka as a key travel destination. In addition, he also advocates for the belief that Sri Lanka holds the opportunity to become the world's most sustainable tourism destination featuring wellness, wellbeing, and mindfulness. His mission has been to motivate the teams at Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts Colombo to achieve these goals.

Aitken Spence Hotels invests heavily in hospitality training to aid industry

TTA BULLETIN



Premier hospitality company Aitken Spence Hotels together with TUI Care Foundation inaugurated its first batch of students for the year 2023 as part of its Aitken Spence Institute of Hotel Management training provided for deserving youth from across the island.

The first batch for the year included 50 students selected from over 200 applicants for a craft level course in restaurant and bar services. The students will undergo a mix model of learning from a theoretical approach conducted by trained lecturers and professional hoteliers to practical knowledge gained by working at Aitken Spence Hotels' reputed properties located island wide in key tourist hotspots. 25 of the students will engage in learning at the Aitken Spence Institute of Hotel Management in Ahungalla and the others at Aitken Spence Institute of Hotel Management Dambulla.

Speaking at the inauguration, Aitken Spence PLC Director, Head of Tourism and Leisure, and Chairperson of Aitken Spence Hotels Management Stasshani Jayawardena said that the importance of investing to mould young hoteliers in Sri Lanka can hardly be overstated. "Despite our recent troubles, Sri Lanka has been identified as a potential tourist hotspot in Asia. The many investments coming into the country in the way of new hotel chains opening or building their dream hotels around the island can attest to that. Our greatest

challenge at present is the lack of skilled professionals within the industry; and this is where we come in."

"The partnership between Aitken Spence Institute of Hotel Management and TUI rewards the deserving – those who are passionate to join the industry but may not have the necessary financial backing to enter the sector. This corporate social responsibility project is globally connected, focused on quality, and strives to make a difference in people's lives. This joint commitment shows great faith in our country and its future."

This is the fifth batch of the craft level course in restaurant and bar services, conducted as part of the continued training provided by Aitken Spence Hotels to build a base of professionals in the hospitality sector, given the dire need for skilled professionals within the industry.

The training provided via Aitken Spence Institute of Hotel Management is based on the syllabus of the Sri Lanka Institute of Hotel Management to ensure industry standards are maintained; whilst the Institute is managed in partnership with the TUI Care Foundation and Sustainable Hospitality Alliance. The TUI Care Foundation / Sustainable Hospitality Alliance and Aitken Spence Institute of Hotel Management partnership has produced 750 trained employees since its inception in 2019.

It's Time for Sri Lanka: Anantara Resorts in Sri Lanka Welcome Returning Holidaymakers with Wanderlust-Inducing Experiences

TTA BULLETIN

Making its way back to travel bucket lists as it reopens for business, the emerald island of Sri Lanka in the Indian Ocean is ready for its close-up. To remind the world's globe-trotting community of the many wonders the destination has to offer, Anantara Kalutara Resort and Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort are inviting holidaymakers to dive into new experiences centred on the commanding presence of the ocean, spirituality and cultural pursuits.

Sheltered along Sri Lanka's breathtaking southern coast, Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort invites guests to rediscover the elusive state of peace and develop the clarity needed to make healthier lifestyle choices with a new three-day Sanjeewana Ayurvedic Journey. Following an in-depth consultation, guests will embark on an immersive programme combining healing spa therapies, mind-cleaning beach walks with the resort's Nature Guru, temple meditation and bonfire mindfulness sessions under the guidance of a monk and a yogi, as well as Sri Lankan cooking classes and soul-soothing wood-oven baking sessions.

Being Sri Lanka's only five-star resort to offer exclusive experiences with Tropic Surf, luxury surf specialists, Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle is the perfect base for those looking for big-wave drops and sand-bottom beginner beaches alike, all within 15 minutes from the property. Guests can also explore local marine life with SUP excursions in the lagoon, set off on a bicycle to get into the thick of the action at bustling markets, join local turtle-watchers on beach patrols to protect hawksbill and leatherback nests, or follow Anantara's Experience Guru into the maze of Tangalle's streets to get a taste of local life.

Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle's all-inclusive three-day Sanjeewana Ayurvedic Journey is priced from USD 1,111 for two persons sharing a room, including a selection



of Ayurveda-inspired meals and special room amenities, and can be combined with the 'Last Minute Kick-Off' offer that starts from USD 342 net per night based on double occupancy and includes 20% savings on luxury accommodation and daily breakfast at Journeys restaurant.

A tropical hideaway shaped by the creative vision of renowned architect Geoffrey Bawa, Anantara Kalutara Resort is located only an hour from the Bandaranaike International Airport – perfect for those spontaneous weekend getaways. From this secluded beachfront setting at the confluence of the Kalu Ganga River and the Indian Ocean, travellers can visit Geoffrey Bawa's legendary Lunuganga estate on the banks of Dedduwa lake in Bentota to wander around its enchanting gardens blending the elements of Italian Renaissance gardens, English landscaping, Japanese garden art and ancient Serendib's water gardens. Another quintessential Sri Lankan experience – a visit to a cinnamon plantation – will introduce the curious to the rich history of local spice trade and the art of cinnamon cultivation, as guests take in the views of the misty mountain range from a hilltop villa on Koggala lake.

On property at Anantara Kalutara, exclusive Treehouse Dining awaits as part of the brand's signature Dining by Design experience. Perched above the river in a rustic treehouse, guests will be served a Ceylonese dinner featuring locally-caught seafood accompanied by spicy sambols, Ceylon teas and traditional desserts such as treacle and buffalo curd, and coconut milk pancakes.

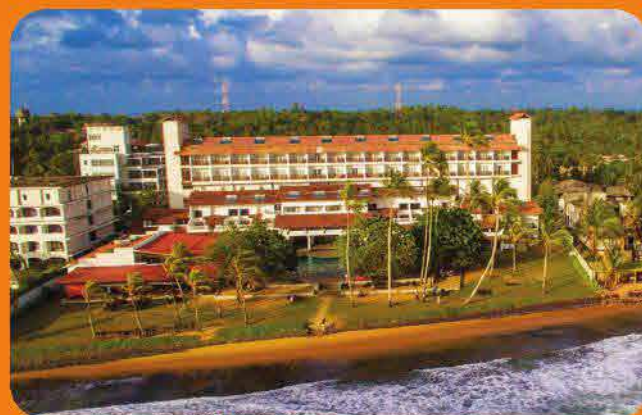
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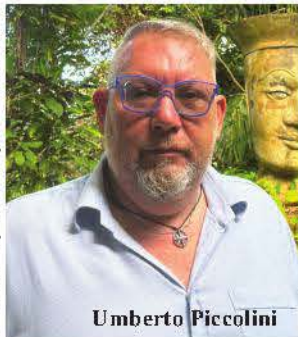
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LUXURY FEATURE

Haritha Villas – a luxurious escape in Southwest Sri Lanka

DINUSHKA CHANDRASENA

When luxury beckons there is no better place than Haritha Villas and is perched on a hill and nestled under a canopy of trees, less than 1 km from Narigama beach and 1.2 km from Hikkaduwa beach. It's an exclusive contemporary resort offering personalized services, spa treatments, private luxury accommodation and a world of experiences as you explore the island; be in cultural, historical or culinary. The blissful surroundings and sense of serenity has a transcending effect on the mind, body and soul. The ultimate blend of authenticity and modernity is perfectly packaged and presented to every single visitor who walks in through their doors.



Umberto Piccolini

"We are proud to offer our guests a bespoke experience here at Haritha Villas and Spa" said Umberto Piccolini General Manager. A passionate hotelier with over 20 years in the hospitality industry around the world, 'Umberto' leaves no leaf unturned.

Your welcome experience is accompanied with a refreshing thirst quencher which is a blend of tropic fruit and natural herbs. A dedicated Villa Master is your 'one man shop' for the duration of your stay and the one who will answer even the most challenging questions about the property and its surroundings and provide you with butler service in and outside of the resort.

While I was privy to the Colonial Mansion with its private infinity pool, spacious verandah, bedroom and living room area, I was not shot of comfy hide outs to feast my eyes on the expansive view of the lush green jungles and acres of paddy fields which sets the stage for many Instagram worthy captures.

The colonial double doors are a unique feature in the mansion. The spectacular outdoor bathroom features all the luxury trimmings while being one with nature. Attention to detail is yet another visitor experience enhancing attribute.

After soaking up the beauty of the surroundings and getting rest on the private sun beds lining by the pool, it was time to head to the Jungle Spa to indulge myself in some pampering.

Set within a verdant jungle environment,



the healing elements of tropical winds and the soothing lap of the lake waters merged with 100% natural, locally sourced spa products, Haritha Villas + Spa, is a resort focusing on health and wellness, is a haven for your mind, body and soul. It has an extensive menu which features numerous

body therapies, acupuncture, singing bowls, hair, nails and skin care treatments using luxury products such as Elemis and Margarete Dabbs. A sensual and holistic experience starts with a consultation with the resident Ayurvedic doctor followed by a tailored made program for each guest.

The signature Balinese massage was my first choice and the therapist who was attentive to all my aches and niggles was a true treat to my senses. The herbal infused tea on arrival and detox tea post treatment was the perfect addition to sooth you from the inside out. While you get to select your favorite essential oil, it is blended with therapeutic natural oils to give your body the best in healing properties.



After a spa ritual, you are both relaxed and rejuvenated, ready to take on the evening and my choice was to experience the well-stocked bar located by The View restaurant where you can dive into innovative local and international cuisine in our luxury restaurant overlooking the infinity pool, sip creatively crafted cocktails on the



Sala, or enjoy an intimate, unscripted dining experience. Every guest can have breakfast for dinner, drink champagne in bed, simply come as they are, enjoy great company and share the passion for extraordinary tailor-made cuisine.

My G&T was created by using Japanese gin, local cinnamon stick and fresh tea

crunching sound of the flambéed sugar coating, I knew I had selected the perfect desert to complement a delicious dinner.

Retrieving to my four-poster bed and calling it a day was blissful as the pampering continued while I drifted off into deep slumber. Waking up to the sound of birds and seeing the sun kissed lush greenery just outside my window was visual delight. The cool breeze sweeping across large open verandah was ideal venue to sip on my espresso.

Our attentive Villa Master JC was on hand at the crack of dawn and furnished me with the breakfast choices which was an extensive variety of breakfast favorites from across the world. I decided to start the day with 'shot' aptly called and elixir followed by a green juice and a granola bowl which married antioxidants with a nutritious blend of fruits, granola and seeds. This was not the end as I wanted to try a bit local fare and had a few 'coconut roti's' which were simply divine. The table was set with a bread

leaves followed by a three-course dinner. On a side note, I arrived early so I was privy to have Umberto whip up a (what he called) a simple lunch where his culinary genius was quite clear as I devoured every bit of my burrata salad. The blend of veggies, herbs and tartness was balanced to perfection with the burrata.

Haritha Villas uniqueness is personalized service, therefore they apply the "Unscripted Dining, From Farm to Table and Destination Dining" Concepts. The Chef met me at soon I approach my table and customize my meal.

My recommendations were the Middle Eastern starter plate of three varieties of hummus (Beet, Avocado and chickpea with pit bread) followed by a traditional Thai green curry and jasmine rice for my main course

The burst of flavors and delightful visual presentation led to a bit of over-indulgence but with no regrets. Having a sweet tooth, digging into crème Brulé was a no brainer. When I tapped my spoon, and heard the

basket filled with delicious homemade pastries and a variety of breads accompanied with wood apple and passion jam (made in-house) and butter. A platter of local fruits was artistically presented as a starter to this breakfast feast This with a cup of Ceylon tea was a breakfast made in heaven. The Belgium waffles with "kithul treacle" SriLankan honey and the eggs benedict are also hot items recommend by the chef. Think the finest French Toast you've ever had, Eggs Benedict with smoked salmon and mango chutney, freshly baked pastries and juicy, tropical fruit.

As the saying goes 'all good things must come to an end' it was time to get back to the real world but I did so feel completely rejuvenated and relaxed. The attentive staff and authentic local smiles were free flowing. The well-maintained gardens and facilities together with the gracious hospitality of all the service representatives made every moment a special one. Haritha Villas and Spa offers more than just a luxury offering with the best in Sri Lankan hospitality - it is medicine for the soul.


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HOTELS / FAMILY ALBUM

Browns Hotels & Resorts bags 10 booking.com Traveller Review Awards 2023

TTA BULLETIN

Browns Hotels & Resorts embraced the new year with another accreditation as their properties were recognized with the Booking.com Traveller Review Award 2023. This notable award is an annual appreciation programme for hospitality partners with outstanding services, determined by the review scores that travellers leave after their stay. To be recognised with an award globally, accommodation partners had to have an average review score of 8.0 (out of 10) or higher, as of 11:59pm (GMT) on November 30, 2022.

The Eden Beruwala, Avani Bentota Resort, Club Hotel Dolphin, Hotel Sigiriya, The

Calm Resort & Spa, The Beach House, as well as all of the boutique properties part of the reveal collection; Lantern Boutique Hotel and Ubuntu Beach Villas, The Lavender House, Stafford Bungalow, all received a Booking.com Traveller Review Award 2023.

Eksath Wijeratne, Group General Manager of Browns Hotels & Resorts, said, "We are absolutely thrilled that the results of our extraordinary services are always being acknowledged. This represents how satisfied guests are with the experiences



Eksath Wijeratne

we offer and how we curate their stay to leave a lasting impression. We all feel a great sense of accomplishment, which motivates us more to provide them with exemplary services that exceed their expectations."

LOLC Group's investments in the leisure sector are clustered under Browns Investments, which maintains controlling interest in several properties in iconic locations locally and overseas. The portfolio currently consists of Avani Bentota Resort, Club Hotel Dolphin,

Dickwella Resort & Spa, Hotel Sigiriya, The Calm Resort & Spa, Occidental Paradise Dambulla, The Eden Beruwala, 05 boutique properties under Reveal and Sheraton Kosgoda Turtle Beach Resort. A further 2 projects, including a 5-star resort in Beruwala and Port City Mega Leisure development comprising of a 5-star city hotel are scheduled to be unveiled soon. Additionally, there is a series of offshore investments with Raddison Blue Poste Lafayette Resort & Spa in Mauritius and 5 upcoming developments in the Maldives with Nasandhura Palace Hotel & Apartment Complex, Hulhumale Resort, Browns Raa Resort, Boduffhinalu (Browns Ari Resort) and Bodhufaru Beach Resort.

69th Annual General Meeting of Skal International Colombo

The 69th Annual General meeting of Skal International was held recently at the California Grill, Galadari Hotel Colombo. The Guest speaker was Richard Nuttall, CEO of Sri Lankan Airlines who addressed the skal members and guests on the state of the Aviation and Tourism industry in Sri Lanka. Dinushka Chandrasena was re-elected President with Abintha Amarasinghe continuing as Vice President. The Executive committee for the year 2023/2024 - Zahara Mufti, Shereen Gunasekera, Nirmalan Nagendra, Keethi Jayaweera, Bernard Wijelunge, Gyan Amarasinghe, Hashan Cooray, Dushy Jayaweera, Shamali De Vas, Sulheash Balasubramaniam and Prasanjith Perera.





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SriLankan Airlines Sets the Stage for Raid Amazonas 2023

TTA BULLETIN

SriLankan Airlines sets the stage to usher in Raid Amazonas, the only itinerant women's adventure race in the world, to Sri Lanka for the second year running as the Presenting Partner. Raid Amazonas will hit the fabled streets of the hill capital, Kandy, between 19 – 29, March 2023 with the participation of over 250 female athletes. SriLankan Airlines is stepping up its efforts toward restoring the country's tourism industry, in part by drawing major international events that help showcase the island's appeal to diverse travel interests in the global arena.



Sri Lanka. This would not have been possible without SriLankan Airlines and other partners. I made a promise to come back to Sri Lanka again, as I felt this is the best time to show the world how safe and authentic Sri Lanka is," enthused Alexandre Debanne, President and Co-Founder of Raid Amazonas.

Ashok Pathirage, Chairman of SriLankan Airlines, stated, "We are thrilled to welcome the participants of Raid Amazonas 2023 to Sri Lanka once again. I am certain that every contestant will find their adventure in Sri Lanka, and hope that they return to their homeland with amazing memories that encourage other adventurers to visit and explore Sri Lanka. At the core of our mission at SriLankan Airlines is not just a desire to expand as an airline, but to take the country forward, and this is furthered in no small measure by partnering with international events."

"SriLankan Airlines definitely spares no effort when it comes to shining a worldwide spotlight on Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has something for every adventure traveller and that is the message that we want to share with the world by teaming with Raid Amazonas this year too. We believe in fostering long-term partnerships that bring dividends in the form of continued opportunities to market the airline and country and look forward to many more years of collaboration with Raid Amazonas," added Richard Nuttall, Chief Executive Officer, SriLankan Airlines.

SriLankan Airlines partnered Raid Amazonas in 2022 soon after recommencing operations to Paris. The airline and Sri Lanka are likely to gain over EUR 10 million worth of publicity globally from the 21st edition this year. The anticipated media coverage will especially help create more awareness of Sri Lanka as an adventure travel hotspot in France and the rest of Europe, where Raid Amazonas is sought-after, and attract adventure-seekers. For SriLankan Airlines, that is the ultimate goal.

Raid Amazonas is a coveted annual destination adventure event originating from France, which features female athletes competing their way through a range of challenges such as orienteering, mountain biking, canoeing, riding, running and archery. Sri Lanka was chosen over rival destinations by the event's founders due to the unparalleled warmth of its people and support on ground to pull off a successful event. Their decision is also down to the airline's tireless marketing efforts to secure the popular trail on successive occasions for Sri Lanka in its hour of need for international tourism support.

During the 21st edition of the trail, the participants will be able to connect with a potpourri of natural and historical highlights as they trek through the Kandyan plateau in Central Sri Lanka. Their journey, though, would begin from the moment that they step onboard SriLankan Airlines to fly from Paris to Colombo, on an aircraft with custom livery dedicated to Raid Amazonas 2023. SriLankan Airlines, together with Connaissance de Ceylan, the official ground handling partner of the event, will go all out to ensure that the French group experiences the best in Sri Lankan hospitality.

"My experience in Sri Lanka with the 20th Raid Amazonas and the excellent feedback received by the participants last year convinced me to hold the 21st edition of Raid Amazonas back-to-back in beautiful

India's Vistara resumes flights to Colombo

TTA BULLETIN

Vistara, an Indian airline, announced resuming flights between Mumbai and Colombo starting from March 1, 2023. The airline will operate daily flights.

The decision to reintroduce this route follows a hiatus of nearly three years, as the airline had to suspend these direct flights due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

This will give passengers looking to travel between the two cities more options, and it shows the airline's commitment to expanding its reach and offering more

destinations to its customers. Tata SIA Airlines Limited, operating as Vistara, is an Indian full-service airline, based in Gurugram, with its hub at Indira Gandhi International Airport. The carrier, a joint venture between Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines, commenced operations in January 2015 with its inaugural flight between Delhi and Mumbai.

The airline had carried more than two million passengers by June 2016 and as of May 2019 and is the 6th largest domestic airline.

Emirates invests US\$ 135 million in new pilot training centre

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates will soon build an advanced training facility to accommodate 6 Full Flight Simulator Bays (FFS) for its future Airbus A350 and Boeing 777X aircraft. The brand new, 63,318 sq. ft. facility is slated to open in March 2024.



them maintain focus and take full advantage of the training duration.

His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman and Chief Executive Emirates Airline and Group, said: "This US\$ 135 million investment to build a new pilot training centre will ensure Emirates' readiness to commence its pilot training ahead of the delivery of its new aircraft fleet starting from 2024. The building will be equipped with the latest, technologically advanced simulators to provide the best training for pilots, while using solar power to reduce energy consumption."

The new building will be adjacent to the existing Emirates Training Facilities in Dubai, which will provide a great integration and close proximity to all the other pilot training centres.

Pilot trainees will also benefit from being able to set-up and configure the cockpit environment using bespoke devices as part of the pilot training module and upload the data to the Full Flight Simulator (FFS) prior to commencing their training session. This innovative, first-of-its-kind concept is designed to shorten the trainee's preparatory time inside the simulator, help

With the addition of the new building to Emirates' existing training colleges in Dubai, the airline will have the potential to expand its pilot training capacity by 54% per year. Across the airline's training buildings, Emirates' pilots will have increased flexibility and facilities to hone their flying skills with 17 full flight simulator bays offering a capacity of more than 130,000 training hours a year.

In line with the scheduled delivery of Emirates' first Airbus A350 aircraft, the airline's newest training college will commence training its first batch of A350 pilots by June 2024.

In addition to modern training facilities for its flight deck crew, the airline offers a range of world-class training and development programmes for its workforce and for other aviation professionals. In Dubai, these include: the Emirates Flight Training Academy for cadets, Emirates Aviation University, Emirates Cabin Crew Training Centre, and numerous programmes specially created for different segments of its employees.

Qatar Airways' Paris Premium Lounge Re-opens

TTA BULLETIN

Qatar Airways re-opened its luxurious Premium Lounge at Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG), complementing the airline's triple daily flights, available for Premium passengers and eligible oneworld alliance partners.



The Premium Lounge features all of the facilities and qualities of the airline's premium product, including both The Brasserie and The Global Deli, prayer rooms, business centre, shower facilities, Wi-Fi and zoned seating for more than 200 guests. Far-reaching views of Paris and the Eiffel Tower, contribute to a warm and relaxing atmosphere.

Catering to exceptional premium culinary standard, the lounge is equipped with a full kitchen for freshly-prepared à la carte orders, in addition to an existing buffet spread, offering an international menu from across the globe.

Commenting on the airline's latest Premium Lounge re-opening, Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker, stated: "This milestone illustrates our focus on continuous product enhancements. The re-opening of the Qatar Airways Premium Lounge at Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport, marks our fifth global lounge within our growing network. This further demonstrates our commitment to providing unparalleled services to our customers, especially in France."

Qatar Airways Paris Premium Lounge launched its operations in 2017 to serve the growing capacity of passengers travelling with the airline from Charles de Gaulle Airport. Today, Qatar Airways operates 18 weekly flights to Paris, offering passengers with the ultimate connectivity to Skytrax' World's Best Airport, Hamad International Airport.

At more than 1,000 square metres, the Qatar Airways Premium Lounge at Paris-Charles de Gaulle offers Qatar Airways First and Business Class passengers a sophisticated, modern and spacious environment in which to relax and commence their five star journey experience.


A multiple award-winning airline, Qatar Airways was recently announced as the 'Airline of the Year' at the 2022 World Airline Awards, managed by the international air transport rating organisation, Skytrax. The airline continues to be synonymous with excellence having won the main prize for an unprecedented seventh time (2011, 2012, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2022), while also being named 'World's Best Business Class', 'World's Best Business Class Lounge Dining' and 'Best Airline in the Middle East'.



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Qatar Airways Hits the Circuit as the Official Airline and Global Partner of Formula 1

TTA BULLETIN

Qatar Airways, the World's Best Airline is now the Global Partner and Official Airline of Formula 1® (F1®), the pinnacle of motorsport and the world's most technologically-advanced racing series. Qatar Airways and F1® will be partners through the 2027 season, bringing thrills and exciting speeds to fans globally.



Today, the leading global airline announced an expansion of its sports partnership portfolio at a captivating event that brought astounding entertainment and special appearances to Doha. In addition to the global partnership, Qatar Airways will be the Title Sponsor of three Grands Prix™ this year: The Qatar Airways Emilia Romagna Grand Prix (19-21 May), the Qatar Airways Hungarian Grand Prix (21-23 July), and the Qatar Airways Qatar Grand Prix (6-8 October).

This season, Formula 1® boasts its most global racing calendar to date with 23 races across 21 countries and five continents, mirroring the motorsport's rapidly growing footprint worldwide and the extensive global connectivity offered by the Qatar Airways oneworld Alliance, which serves over 150 countries.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker, said: "The best partnerships thrive because of mutual values. Both Qatar Airways and Formula 1® are global brands that share a passion for innovation, precision and luxury. As a brand, we believe in the power of sports to unite people, and as such, we have been selective with picking the most thrilling sporting events and sponsoring a variety of new and prominent sporting initiatives."

"With 23 stops in the 2023 World Championship, F1® is a global sport, requiring a Global Airline partner that offers extensive global connectivity. Hence, Qatar Airways demonstrates the perfect companion for one of the most desirable sports series in the world."

Stefano Domenicali, President & CEO of Formula 1®, said: "As the pinnacle of motorsport, it makes sense for Formula 1® to partner with the World's Best Airline, Qatar Airways. We are two brands committed to delivering the best experiences to our fans and customers, and our combined global reach makes for a perfect match. We are delighted to welcome Qatar Airways as our Global Airline Partner."

On his part, Mr. Abdulrahman bin Abdullah Al-Mannai, QMMF's President, said: "We are pleased that Qatar Airways is joining as the Global Partner and Official Airline of Formula 1®, as well as a title sponsor for both Formula 1® Qatar Grand Prix and Qatar MotoGP. We strongly believe that this partnership will place Qatar at the forefront of the motorsport ecosystem through hosting such prestigious events, in

addition to positioning the country as a global hub for sports and entertainment tourism. This will contribute towards pushing the wheel of our society's growth and development and will pave the way for tremendous business and investment opportunities."

To commemorate this partnership, Qatar Airways hosted a special evening for the public at Doha's iconic Lusail Boulevard, to mark the F1® announcement and raise awareness about all the motorsport events taking place in Qatar this year. H.E. Minister of Sports and Youth, Mr. Salah bin Ghanim Al Ali inaugurated the official partnership along with QMMF's President, Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Mannai, Formula 1® President and CEO, Stefano Domenicali, and MotoGP CEO Carmelo Ezpeleta.

The event featured a special appearance from the Qatari rally champion Nasser Al-Attiyah, former Red Bull Formula 1® driver, David Coulthard, KTM MotoGP rider, Dani Pedrosa, stunt rider, Mike Jensen, a Red Bull drift car driven by Abdo Feghali and a static display of an FIA World Endurance Championship Hyper car. Spectators were also treated to a dazzling performance by the best-selling R&B artist, Akon.

For only the second time in history, motorsport fanatics will have the chance to watch their favourite teams and drivers push their cars to the limit at the Lusail International Circuit when F1® heads back to Qatar for the Qatar Airways Grand Prix on 6-8 October, 2023.

In addition to the Formula 1® Qatar Airways Qatar Grand Prix 2023, the Lusail International Circuit will host the Qatar Moto GP on 17-19 November. Other motorsport events in Qatar include the Geneva International Motor Show Qatar in October 2023 and the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) World Endurance Championship in 2024.

To celebrate this partnership, Discover Qatar, the Destination Management Company of Qatar Airways, are the first to offer tickets to the Formula 1® Qatar Airways Qatar Grand Prix 2023. Today, Discover Qatar have exclusively launched a comprehensive range of hotel and ticket-inclusive packages to their global retail partners, which include Grandstand and prestigious Paddock Club tickets. All packages include a free entry pass to the Geneva International Motor Show Qatar taking place in Doha from 5-14 October, courtesy of Qatar Tourism.

Emirates boosts operations to Cairo

TTA BULLETIN

Emirates today announced that it will boost its operations to and from Cairo to 28 weekly flights, effective 29 October, 2023. The additional flights provide more options for customers to connect to Dubai and beyond with enhanced schedules and the opportunity to enjoy more of the Emirates A380's signature experience.



The operational boost will see Emirates operating four daily flights, thrice daily on the A380 and a daily service on the Boeing 777. Cairo has the highest deployment of Emirates A380 services in the MENA region, outside of Dubai. The additional services and upgrade of seat capacity on the Dubai-Cairo route will help meet high demand to and from Cairo and support the country's tourism revival with the addition of more than 2,200 weekly seats in each direction.

EK921 will now operate daily, departing at 12:00hrs from Dubai to arrive at Cairo International Airport at 14:15hrs. The return service EK922 will depart from Cairo at 16:15hrs, to arrive at 21:45hrs in Dubai. Emirates' third A380 service to Cairo, EK925 will depart Dubai at 20:40hrs landing at 22:55hrs. EK926 will then depart Cairo, the following day at 00:40 hrs, to arrive in Dubai at 06:10hrs.

The Emirates A380 experience remains highly sought after by travellers for its spacious and comfortable cabins, and signature products that offer travellers the best experiences in the sky like the Onboard Lounge, First Class suites and Shower Spa. The airline currently deploys its flagship A380 to 41 destinations worldwide.

The modern Boeing 777-300ER aircraft in a

three-class configuration on flights to Cairo offer Emirates' award-winning service and industry-leading products, with private suites in First Class, lie flat seats in Business Class and spacious seats in Economy Class.

Customers can enjoy the world-class service and products Emirates has to offer on board, including ice, Emirates' inflight entertainment system with over 5,000 channels of on-demand movies, music, TV shows, box sets and documentaries, in over 40 languages, including an extensive selection of content in Arabic like classic and new Egyptian movies and TV shows, as well as the best of Egyptian music. Guests in all classes can also enjoy delicious multi-course meals prepared by award-winning chefs on the flight.

Emirates started operations to Cairo in April 1986 with three flights a week and since then, has carried 9.6 million passengers to and from Cairo. Operations have steadily grown with increases in both frequency and capacity between Cairo and Dubai to match customer demand.

Today, Emirates operates 25 weekly flights between Cairo and Dubai. Over the last three decades, the airline has made an important contribution to the local economy and tourism by flying in visitors from across its global network spanning six continents.

Oman Air Celebrates First Female Omani Captain

TTA BULLETIN

Oman's aviation industry has reached a landmark moment with the announcement of Oman Air pilot Maha Al Balushi as the first female Omani Captain. Al Balushi officially received her new rank during a ceremony recently held at the Oman Air's headquarters in Muscat, the latest in a string of firsts she has achieved over her decade-long career with the airline.



Al Balushi said, "My dream has always been to become a Captain. It hasn't been easy but thanks to the support I have around me, from my family to my training team and the airline, I have accomplished what I set out to do. It is an honour to hold this role and I hope that I will inspire other Omani women to choose such a rewarding career in the skies."

Captain Moosa Al Shidhani, Senior Vice President Flight Operations at Oman Air, added, "We are thrilled to have Ms. Al Balushi as our first female Omani Captain, and we believe this is just the beginning of great things to come. This is not just a milestone for our airline but for Oman's aviation industry, and we are honoured to play a leading role in its progress by continuing to nurture Omani talent in all areas of our operations."

Maha Al Balushi has been with Oman Air

since 2010, after graduating from the cadet programme at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in Australia, the only woman who was enrolled in the programme at the time. Ms. Al Balushi also made waves when she became Oman's first female First Officer in 2013.

Oman Air continues to pursue a proactive policy of recognising talented and qualified women and supporting them to excel within their chosen careers. Today, over 1,230 Omani female employees contribute to the airline's strength and represent a range of levels and roles including cabin crew, flight operations, engineering, airport services, marketing, customer services, sales and communications. Meanwhile, having achieved an Omaniisation rate of 94% (excluding female cabin crew), the airline provides rich and varied career development opportunities, as well as internships and graduate training programmes that expand horizons for young Omanis.

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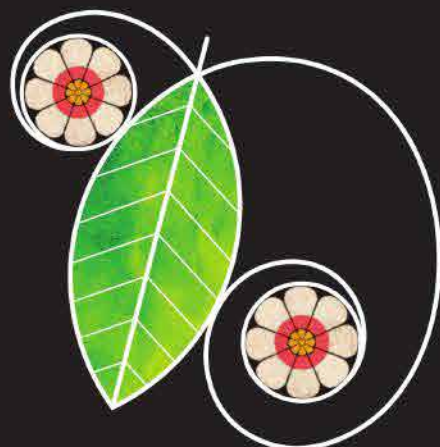
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