

**The TRAVELLER**  
with Harischandra Gunaratna



**'Flavours of Rome' at the Bay Leaf**  
Colombo's finest Italian restaurant, The Bay Leaf, permeates with the flavours and aromas of Rome this month with a special promotion which begins on Friday 15 March, where a variety of culinary dishes from the different regions of Rome will take pride of place. The appetising signature dishes which launch the promo are Insalata Di Prosciutto (mixed green lettuce with fresh Mozzarella, tomato, grilled vegetables and parma ham with an Italian dressing), Pasta E Fagioli (Roman chickpea soup & pasta) and Pollo Alla Romana (chicken medallions panfried with parma ham, parmesan cheese, sage, mushrooms and white wine). Together with this is also the Pizza of the Month - 'Pizza Alla Bay Leaf' with its generous share of mozzarella, garlic, anchovies, fetta cheese, pesto, sundried tomatoes and black olives.

**Milkshake madness at 'The Commons'**  
Colombo's cozy hang-out and much loved Coffee House, 'The Commons', goes crazy this month, March, with an exciting and invigorating Milkshake Promotion. Kicking off from Monday 18 March, the thirst quenching array on offer will include Double Chocolate Milkshake, Fresh Strawberry Milkshake, Chocolate Espresso Mint Shake, Avocado Milkshake, Chocolate Brownie Milkshake, Pineapple Milkshake, etc. The Commons now-legendary 'Rotti Cart on Wheels' joins the milkshake promo and offers three mini savoury rottis for a minimum of three milkshakes purchased. In addition to these variants, which will be served both Small and Large, will also be the in-house, off-the-traditional-menu milkshakes such as Chocolate, Vanilla, Strawberry, Honey, Coffee, Mango and Banana. The Rotti Cart also has its very own 'March Special' - Spicy Negombo Lagoon Crab Rotti' - for all of Colombo's Rotti lovers. Among the other variants in the Rotti menu are both sweet and savoury fillings such as Roast Chicken, Chilli Beef, Prawns Curry, BBQ, Sausages, Mutton Kheema, Tandoori Chicken, Cheese & Tomato, Savoury Cheese, Banana & Honey, Banana & Condensed Milk with Chocolate Sauce, Brownie with Chocolate Sauce, Mango & Syrup, Banana & Chocolate etc.



**New Coffee Menu @ Café County**  
Café County of Ceylon Continental Hotel Colombo has introduced a new Coffee Menu to all the coffee lovers who would prefer to relax while having their favorite coffee in our brand new pastry shop which is one of the spacious in Colombo. You could enjoy the traditional coffee made with a caring touch and you would love the unique presentation of different varieties of coffee made to its best quality. CAPPUCCINO, soft & rich dark Italian coffee topped with velvety steamed milk garnished with cocoa powder. CAFÉ LATTE, Espresso topped with velvety steamed milk, ICE CAFÉ ALL'AMERITTO, Chilled Espresso, Ameritto flavour and Vanilla ice-cream, MAROCCHINO, Espresso & bitter cocoa powder with milk, AMERICANO, Espresso served with hot water for long black coffee, ESPRESSO CONTINENTAL, soft and rich dark espresso topped with marshmallow is to name a few in the coffee menu. Café County is open daily from 6.30 am to 9.00 pm.



**Variety at it's best**  
When it comes to dining, and decision making in what to order, or the feeling of wanting to have something different when one visits his or her favourite restaurant can be quite exasperating one might say? But the chefs in all of the specialty restaurants at the Trans Asia Hotel take the initiative to come up with special dishes - in fact a complete meal at the dawn of each month! So, at the Saffron Restaurant from the 7th March till the end of the month emerges the Mumtaji Bhandar which comprises a chicken preparation, dhal Makhani, a beautiful prawn dish and Angari machchi tikka served with Green Pea Rice and naan. Now, wouldn't you say that indeed is more than what any one person can consume? For just Rs.1200 plus taxes, enjoy this amazing combination. Similarly, at the Royal Thai which has become a must be seen at venue, is what they call the Thai Steam Boat! This dish is a combination of a choice of seafood steamed and served with typical Thai herbs and spices. Wholesome as it sounds, the price of this dish is also Rs.1200 plus taxes and seen above.

# Tourism - points to ponder

by Rajini Silva  
Today in a globalized milieu, dominated by increasing regionalism, people to people contact and integration of economies to diverse cultures, Sri Lanka cannot enhance its tourism potential and vistas in isolation and in seclusion.

Given this premise, wish to submit several propositions and proposals, which would enable Sri Lanka to attract more tourists and visitors, not only from the region but also from distant parts of the world. As we are well aware that Sri Lanka attracts approximately 500,000 tourists and visitors in a given year, whereas countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Thailand attract well over 10-15 million people in a given year. Many of the countries in Europe, attract well over 30-50 million tourists in a given year. Today, tourism sector has emerged as one of the five highest foreign exchange earners and employers in the country. It is heartening to note the efforts, programs and promotional campaigns of the country to enhance tourism but equally disheartening to realize that Sri Lanka is yet to exploit its full potential to be a more favored tourist destination. It is noteworthy to state that the recent Presidential Award Ceremony held to facilitate and acknowledge the contribution extended by personalities and corporates in the tourism sector was commendable. Sri Lanka does possess the essential features necessary to be a highly favored and sought after tourist destination, not only in the region but in the world as well. One is well aware of the myriad of natural endowments, in particular, Sri Lanka possesses in order to attract tourists and visitors. Most often the first point of contact of a tourist/visitor, when he or she arrives in Sri Lanka, is the airport. It may be correct to add that not many a tourists visit Sri Lanka in luxury passenger liners or cruise ships. It would be critical to further improve the outlook and 'optics' of the Colombo International Airport, thus creating a sense of appeal and excitement as a given tourist traverses through the airport. From the airport to the city of Colombo, at peak traffic hours, one could expend as much as 2-3 hours. The same equation would be applicable when leaving the city of Colombo to the airport, at peak hours. Many tourists and expatriate/foreign business persons experience these impediments and inconveniences often when they leave Colombo to the airport. On the same note, one may commend that the airport has been markedly improved in the recent past. However, in order to contend both with the neighboring and South East Asian countries, the airport needs to be comparable to, if not better than that of them. It would be presumptuous to state that it is indispensable to develop the infrastructure, particularly, between the airport to

Colombo and the infrastructure of the country, in general. In order for any country to attract tourists on a significant scale, the infrastructure, including hotels, restaurants and transportation facilities, should be addressed and should be well developed. Further, if a tourist who visits Sri Lanka for 3-4 days and who wishes to visit as many places as possible in the country, would confront natural hindrances and difficulties due to lack of developed infrastructure. On the same note, hotels ranging from one star to five star class should be constructed in places of interest in the country, which would accommodate them both from the tourist aspects as well as from economic aspects.

**The writer is a Chartered Architect by profession, is the Managing Director of ES Holidays Pvt. Ltd., ES Arch Construction Pvt. Ltd. and ES Properties Pvt. Ltd. of the Ebert Silva Group and Director of Cbr Consultant Chartered Architect Pvt. Ltd.**  
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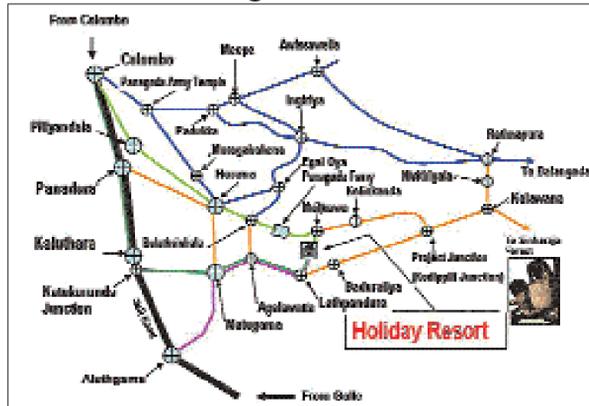
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## Kukuleganga resort; a hideaway in the foothills of Sinharaja

by Dasun Edirisinghe  
It's away from the hustle and the bustle of the metropolis and we were on our way to the salubrious Kukuleganga Holiday Resort situated 20 km from Matugama. From Colombo it's a two hour journey by car to Matugama. One would experience the gradual climatic change after passing the Matugama town and one enters in to different terrain and witness the beautiful and breathtaking landscape which keeps changing. As you move closer to your destination one could spot hardly any vehicles on the winding road. It's a welcome change and the area is bestowed with natural beauty and soothes the tired minds. This area has a high rain fall and when we reached the place it was raining.



earned holiday in a tranquil environment with a breathtaking view. The visitors could drive their vehicles right up to the apartment and a vehicle parking area is also available for every apartment. "At present, our apartments are in big demand among local and foreign guests and all apartments are full during the weekends. We have many repeat families who visit us regularly," Col. Fonseka said.

resort as the venue for their conferences and they mix business with pleasure he said. The auditorium could accommodate 100 pax in theatre style with multi media facilities. "Its soothing to the ear to listen to the fleeting sounds emanating from the flute of a villager atop a tree in a turret in the resort. It's more or less a ritual at the resort every evening much to the delight of all the guests," he said adding that it is very common for one hear a villager playing his flute after hard days work in the fields in this rustic atmosphere.

The Kukuleganga Holiday Resort situated in the foothills of the Sinharaja forest, boasts of an environment which is unique to the particular area. The resort is managed by the Institute of Peace Support



Kukuleganga Holiday Resort. - Pix by Nishan S. Priyantha

Operations Training Sri Lanka. Initially this resort was operated for the purpose providing accommodation to foreign Army personnel who visited here for training programmes. But when it doesn't operate as a training facilities during some parts of the year, it provides accommodation to foreign military officers.

Chief Executive Officer of the Kukuleganga Holiday Resort Colonel Kamal Fonseka said there is a total of 164 apartments with single, double and tripple bedrooms. The resort provides the services of a Club House with a play area and offer the facilities of a Swimming Pool, Tennis Court, Squash Court Gymnasium walking trails etc. It is considered a highly desirable weekend retreat patronized by locals as well as foreigners. The luxury apartments are independent from each other, but situated in close proximity and provides all services and facilities of a five star resort. The holiday makers patronising this resort are assured of a well

The restaurant adjacent to the Swimming Pool serves both Western and Sri Lankan cuisine and the well equipped restaurant could serve 100 guests at any given time. Qualified and well trained staff is known among the guests for their quality service Fonseka said. Its well equipped and air conditioned auditorium is quite popular among the corporate clients and other institutions and a large number of such organisations have chosen our

The resort has modern Spa treatment, physiotherapy with herbal medicine in a well equipped, A/C Spa conducted by trained therapists. The Sauna facilities are also available within the resort. One who is desirous of a sauna bath will surely enjoy it in a fully equipped cabin just by the swimming pool assisted by a trained attendant. The guests here can visit surrounding areas of the resort like the Kukuleganga hydro power project, Pahiyangala rock and temple, Sinharaja forest, Makeli Ella water falls, Famous Dan tree, Akasa bokkuwa (Sky bridge), Kalugala monastery.



## Amila wins Wine Sommelier Competition

A product of Cinnamon Lodge Habarana, Amila Uddika Dissanayake, was adjudged The E & J Gallo Winner Sommelier Champion at the Wine Appreciation Programme held at Cinnamon Grand recently.



Amila Uddika Dissanayake with awards.

Amila was among approximately 300 other participants from all over the island who took part in the programme which was held for over three months. He was awarded a shield and certificate for his outstanding performance in sommelier skills. The programme was broken into three rounds: regional, semi-finals and finals. Out of the 5 participants from Cinnamon Lodge Habarana, Amila was chosen for the semi-final round with 26 other participants after getting through a written test.

In the semi-final round, the participants, in addition to being trained in Colombo for four days on wine tasting by the Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism, were tested on aroma tasting and identifying and describing particular wines. Amila was then among the top 12 who were chosen for the finals at which he was able to outdo the other contestants with his knowledge on sales skills, pairing wine and food, service of wine, convincing ability and character of wines, among a few other important aspects. In second place was Hilton Colombo, while Taj Exotica came in third.

Amila joined Habarana Lodge as a trainee steward two and half years ago. With the re-branding of Habarana Lodge as Cinnamon Lodge Habaran, the butler service was introduced as a value addition and Amila was selected for this training, purely on his performance since joining the hotel. Though a steward and butler, Amila was also selected by the training team to the development squad of Cinnamon Lodge for the Bartenders' competition. Cinnamon Lodge Habarana, which constantly trains its staff, conducted an intensive training programme for Amila after he won the first round of the E & J Gallo Wine Programme. Following his win, Cinnamon is hoping to provide Amila with more training locally and overseas so he can upgrade his skills. The E & J Gallo Wine Appreciation Programme, held for the 13th time, was sponsored and organized by Free Lanka Trading and the Ceylon Hotel School Graduates Association. Cinnamon Lodge Habarana is part of John Keells Holdings PLC (JKH) - Sri Lanka's largest listed conglomerate with the highest market capitalisation on the Colombo Stock Exchange.

## Visit of three generations to Browns Beach Hotel



Joyce with her daughter and Grand daughter.

Mrs. Joyce together with her daughter, Christine, Grand daughter Amy and their husbands Christopher and Anthony visited Browns Beach Hotel. Mrs. Joyce and her sister Mrs. Peggy are here making their fourth visit to Browns. Joyce was determined to organise a big family get-together in Sri Lanka and in the process had to make elaborate plans. She says "I had utmost confidence that the country is one of the safest tourist destinations and Browns Beach is the ideal place for the celebration." Peggy says, they started coming to Sri Lanka in 1979 when Negombo was a small "Fishing Village" with very few hotels, like Browns Beach Hotel and Blue Oceanic Hotel. She further reminded of the Tsunami that they both experienced in 2004 while

holidaying in Beruwela and how a German Tourist came to her rescue. She also said how happy she is to be back with Sri Lankans in Sri Lanka which is their Second Home. "It's a Home away from Home," she said. Amy is very happy to select Sri Lanka to have spent this special holiday. Joyce is going to be a Great Grand Mother very soon. She had amazed with the breathtaking view of the Indian ocean and the largest beach front that Browns offer. Joyce says she is planning to visit Sri Lanka with the Forth Generation as well and we all wish her that Her dream will come true. They enjoyed the delectable and spicy food at Browns and were impressed of the reflexology treatment at Browns conducted by the Reflexologist Chinghua Tang.