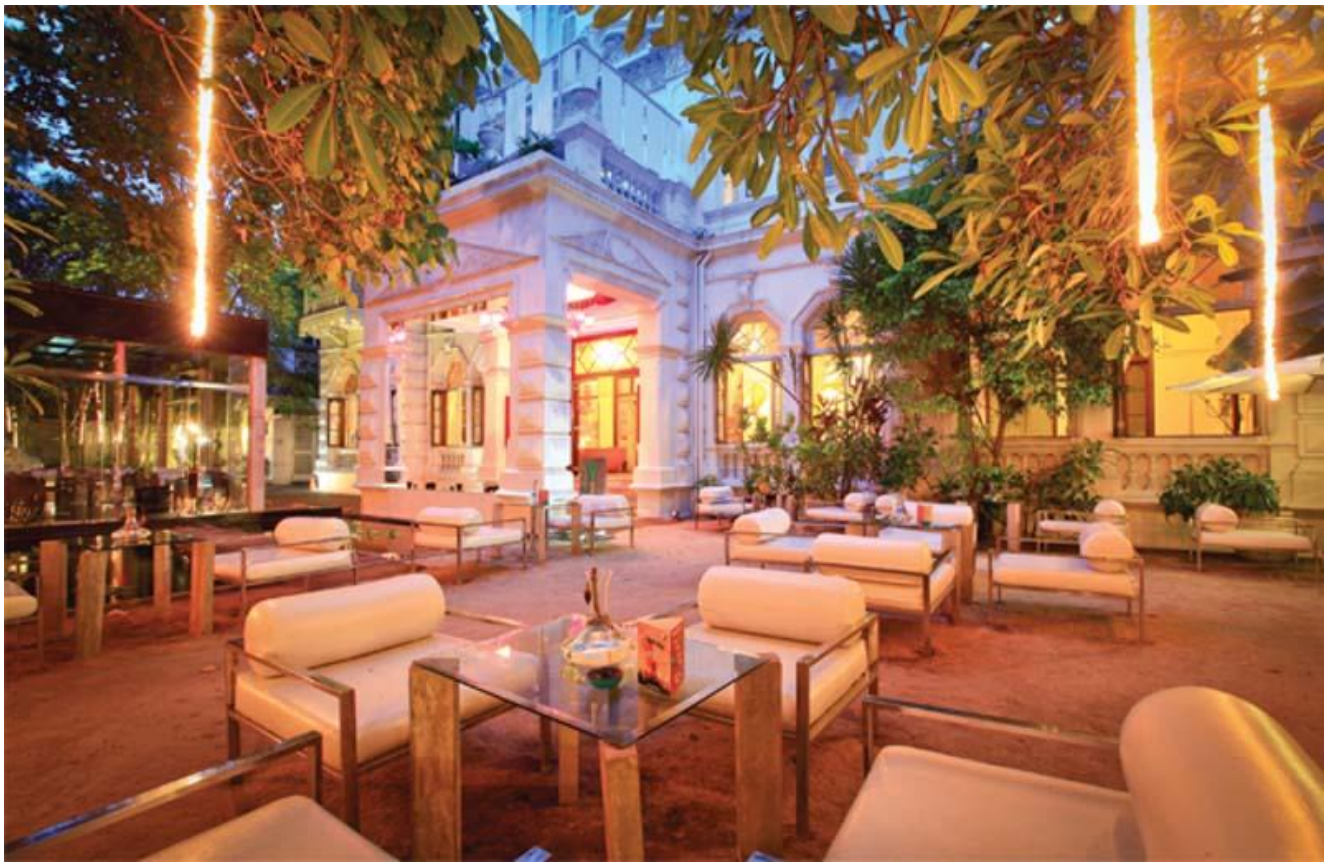
Casa Colombo Sanctuary in the City

Posted on



It is a transition from one world to another. One moment you are in the heart of a bustling city, the next you have entered a quaint sanctuary where the old world meets the new in a unique blend of history, opulence, hospitality and art.

Words Ayesha Inoon **Photographs** Damith Wickramasinghe

Housed in a 200-year-old Moorish mansion that has been renovated to become one of Colombo’s most distinctively designed structures, Casa Colombo is a boutique hotel that offers an aesthetic experience down a private cul-de-sac in the busy hub of Bambalapitiya.

At the entrance to Casa is the quirky glass cube that houses the ZAZA bar, with its

chic ball chairs and plush cushions. By day the bar is a light, airy space that blends into the surroundings with its transparent walls. Beside the swirling waters of the pond that lies on one side of the bar and under the canopy of the blue sky, one can sample Ceylon Tea in a variety of ways, from single origin tea to tea mocktails that combine exciting flavours from Cinnamon to Rose and Vanilla. There is also a selection of “Iced T Shots”, non-alcoholic flavoured teas served in shot glasses.

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As night falls, ZAZA transforms into a bar/lounge area with a classy atmosphere, upbeat music and an array of international liquors that are presented in signature cocktails. Thursdays are ladies’ nights at the bar when the standard happy hour from 5.30 to 7.30 pm is extended until 9.30 pm.

At the T Republic, an outdoor tea lounge on the lawn you can drink in the sunshine to the music of the water fountain that pours into the pond. The tranquil ambience invites you to spend a lazy afternoon, sipping a cold iced tea or hot coffee, tucking into one of the light snacks or sandwiches on offer.

In the main building of the hotel, everything is a work of art to be appreciated and admired, from the unique pieces of locally sourced furniture to the magnificently carved ceilings and the intricate mosaic tiles on the floor. Having been originally built by a wealthy Indian family, this ancient mansion was restored in 2006 by Lalin Jinasena, Founder and Designer of Casa Colombo. Today, the lovely structure retains its former glory, the rich culture of its past blending seamlessly with the sophistication and modernity of its present.

The grand hall of the mansion has been converted into the main restaurant, ‘HVN’, where the elaborately carved gold ceiling, murals of meditating rishis floating amidst the clouds, organza glass tables and a massive antique ceiling fan that consists of a single beam spanning 18 feet, gives one the impression of having entered heavenly realms. Tasting the dishes on the eclectic fusion menu will take this feeling one step further, with a mouthwatering array of soups, starters and mains including the hotel’s signature dishes – the Lemongrass and Ginger Chicken, Jumbo Prawns and Grilled Lobster.

The restaurant leads into the library lounge, with its large, cozy sofas and books literally placed in nooks in the walls, welcoming you to spend a relaxed afternoon

perusing your favourite books or magazines or browsing the internet with the free WiFi.

At the rear of Casa Colombo is its pièce de résistance, the ‘Pink Pool’ where in-house guests can enjoy a refreshing swim on a warm day. With its salmon pink appearance and chrome balls floating on the water, the pool gives the effect of a sheltered pond. It is surrounded by eight glass sun beds and three canopied day beds and the poolside has been recently refurbished with a boarded floor and private grassy dining area that is perfect for intimate dinners.

The elegance and sumptuousness of the décor and amenities in the hotel are carried through to the 12 suites – three Traveller suites, eight Corporate suites and one Royal suite. Each suite is uniquely designed, with its own colour theme and custom designed furniture, inviting guests to revel in the lap of luxury with its many amenities such as waterfall showers, flat screen televisions, magnificent king or queen sized beds and iPods with both classic and new movies. The Royal suite also has a jacuzzi, luxury bathtub and private patio. Guests have the option of taking home a tangible memory in the form of a piece of furniture or art, which the hotel will have replicated and shipped to the required destination.

The hotel is known for its exceptional standards of service, making guests feel special and pampered from the moment they set foot in its premises. You will enjoy the services of your own personal ‘Casa Domo’ or butler to take care of you and the hotel arranges everything from airport transfers to day or overnight excursions in different parts of the Island. The airport runs as well as city tours are usually done in Casa Colombo’s prided luxury vintage vehicle – a refurbished Volkswagen that exudes the same charm and authenticity as the hotel.

Whether for a casual lunch with a friend, romantic evening with a loved one, corporate event, intimate wedding or overnight getaway, Casa Colombo has the ingredients to ensure a perfect experience. It is a world where, once you enter, you will not want to leave, a world where the cares of life dissipate in an aura of beautiful surroundings and luxurious indulgence, where cherished memories are created to last a lifetime.

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