Charming Retreat Amidst Nature

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A breathtaking view of the swimming pool in the backdrop of the nature

PEACEFUL The grand view of the golf course, the Victoria Reservoir and the mountain range in the distance is a view to relish. A wondrous journey in tranquillity sheathed in pristine nature is disturbed only by the call of birds. The Bougainvillea Retreat peeks resplendently through the vastness of the landscape. Situated in Rajawelle, Kandy, this once private bungalow turned boutique hotel is the epitome of simplistic charm.

Words Jennifer Paldano Goonewardane **Photographs** Damith Wickramasinghe

Bougainvillea Retreat is a haven and a hideaway from the deafening chaos of the city. Overlooking the Victoria Reservoir, this villa-styled boutique hotel is tucked away at an altitude that provides a breathtaking view of the lake and the endless mountains rising to the skies.

Driving through the gates of Bougainvillea Retreat, the visitor is confronted by an architectural beauty that balances with the tranquillity of the environment. With lush foliage and the signature bougainvillea plant, the structure has been kept simple to allow the visitor to take in the natural beauty.

The spacious sitting area on the ground floor reveals the swimming pool, providing a gorgeous view over the mountains. Time seems to stand still as one lounges upon a comfortable couch in the living room or beside the pool to watch the changing shades of the day. A billiard table is on hand to break the pleasant feeling of idleness.

The main house has three double rooms and a Master Suite. There are five separate rooms in the garden. The garden rooms have been built for privacy with three individual double rooms that provide a breathtaking view of the reservoir and the mountains, and a single unit with two rooms, ideal for a family. The main guesthouse is a model of architectural ingenuity. Built upon a rock, this boutique hotel has managed to preserve the natural setting of the property by situating the house and its surrounding complexes at different elevations, merging effortlessly with the lush scenery.

The balcony extending from all the rooms in the building connects the many spaces in the house; a link between the interior spaces and the surroundings. Hugely influenced by Scandinavian and Tuscan architecture, the emphasis on transparency and light is evident in all the rooms, with large windows that can be opened to expose the grand view beyond. Rooms have been arranged in an uncluttered manner with minimum accessories, which provide a ‘home away from home’ experience amidst the unruffled beauty of nature and the placid waters below.

Pi Fernandez has been the General Manager at Bougainvillea Retreat since it was converted into a boutique hotel two years ago. Managing the place with a capable staff of nine, she ensures that the atmosphere accentuated by the decor of the interior and the ambience, together with personalised service, provides the ‘real’ experience of a boutique hotel. The hotel can accommodate 18 guests and every aspect of the guest’s experience has a personal touch, from planning the menu to excursions.

Making the guests feel happy and content is an important part of this boutique hotel’s personalised hospitality. Food is prepared to suit the requirements of guests. Bread, pasta, muesli and ice cream are made in-house. Often fresh herbs for salads come from the hotel’s own garden.

Guests at Bougainvillea Retreat can experience something other than the usual sites in Kandy such as excursions to Hantane, the Knuckles Nature Reserve and the ancient Lankathilake temple. This is in addition to guests being able to drive to the

golf club for a game of golf. A walking trail to the reservoir allows the visitor to go trekking or canoeing, exciting when the reservoir is full.A bicycle ride to survey the beauty of the environment is another exhilarating activity. An interlude in the Jacuzzi, a body massage and time spent on the ‘yoga floor’ in the garden adds enchantment to a leisurely stay at Bougainvillea Retreat.

Bougainvillea Retreat

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