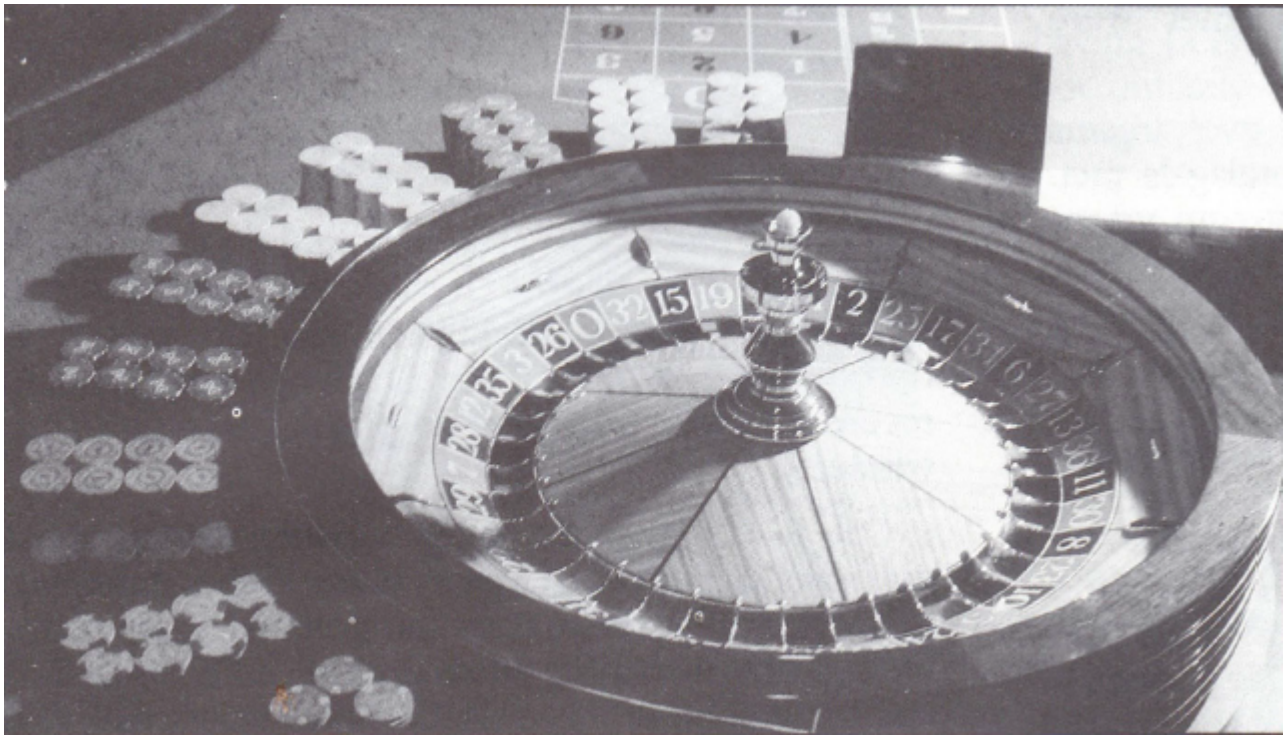
Colombo’s Newest Attraction

Posted on

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The first sight that greets an arriving passenger at Katunayake International Airport is a spectrum of bright eye-catching advertisements for casinos.

Colombo, fast becoming the Las Vegas of the East, continues to sprout new casinos at an amazing rate, with almost all five-star hotels now offering clubs as part of their entertainment services.



Flirting with lady luck at the card table Suresh de Silva.

A sector of the more conservative local population may disagree with the phenomenal growth of this industry, but it appears to go hand in hand with tourism which has been one of the mainstays of the country’s economy.

To some, gambling whether with cards, dice, horses, dogs or whatever is pure entertainment; to others it is serious business, and the variety of casinos and betting centres that exist in Sri Lanka cater without a doubt to every taste and milieu of society, resident and foreign.

The newest neon sign to light up Colombo’s night skyline is the giant structure that sits atop the former Duty Free Shopping Complex building on Galle Road in Colombo 3.

The building itself, imposing in black and red, invites curiosity. This then is the ROY AL ASCOT Casino and Betting Chambers, and as one steps inside the side entrance with its red carpet extended onto the pavement, exclusive style is guaranteed.

Sure enough, from the ground floor lobby with its red velvet carpet and red and black decor with mirrored walls one steps into a lift and then out onto the first floor, into what is being called the “biggest betting shop in the world”.

On the right-hand side of a vast expanse of greencarpeted floor space is the Betting Centre, and on the left the Casino area-the first time in Sri Lanka the two have been combined on such a grand scale.

Black and red is the theme of the interior decor here .too. The young male and female croupiers are the smartest yet seen in Colombo, their designer-made black suits and red bow ties add an extra touch of class to the club.

What sets the ROYAL ASCOT aside from existing casinos, however, is the fact that Sri Lankan-owned establishment in the country co provide computerised facilities.

At present, 12 television screens facing out onto both areas give constant print-outs of the results of races being run in Britain, while running live commentaries are piped into the room at frequent intervals, adding a touch of excitement to the usually quiet and sober proceedings one finds in a club.

A client was heard to say that this was the first time anywhere in the world he was able to play the tables and listen to the race commentaries at the same time, a unique experience in his mind, and one that should attract others with similar double interests.

Similar computerised services are to be extended to the Blackjack, Roulette and Baccarat tables so that the winning numbers of previous and present games will be constantly displayed on screen. These state-of-the art facilities are what will make ROYAL ASCOT the ‘talk of the town’ in the casino circuit.

At present ROYAL ASCOT provides three Black Jack tables, three Baccarat and two Roulette with two more of the latter to be added. The limits on all games are extendable on the client’s request.

Though the ROYAL ASCOT was only inaugurated on September 1st, plans for expansion on a grand scale are already underway. An exclusive VIP section is to be initiated on another floor and a special membership system is to be introduced, guaranteeing the utmost for discerning clients.

The other attractions of the ROYAL ASCOT are the special promotions and games that are soon to be initiated. Videos on how to improve one’s game will be shown regularly in a comfortable viewing area, there will be jackpots galore and ‘fun’ – type games with interesting prizes to be won.

Most of these ideas are being worked out by the club’s manager, Scottish-born Robert Szemis. He boasts 17 years of experience in the profession, having worked in exclusive clubs in Glasgow and London, frequented by royalty and VIP personalities.

Robert is responsible for training ROYAL ASCOTs croupiers, some of whom he believes have the exceptional qualities of a cool computer-type mind and good personalities-characteristics required to be able to deal with the variety of Continental, American Far Eastern and Local customers who frequent the club.

At present ROYAL ASCOT functions from 6.00 p.m. to 3.00 a.m. but it is possible both these times will be extended to cater to its clients’ wishes.

A visit to the ROYAL ASCOT is a must even if just to experience the style and facilities offered. You may win, you may lose; but then it’s all part of the game, isn’t it? Good Luck!



Spinning the wheel to a fortune’ Suresh de Silva