Escape To The Other Corner

Posted on
To lounge beside the pool

True to its name, The Other Corner reveals itself to guests like a well-kept secret. While comforts await discovery, the first impressions are of nature’s soothing greetings.

Words Prasadini Nanayakkara **Photographs** Damith Wickramasinghe

A little opening in the thicket and a walk along a springy suspension bridge to the premises, is a beginning marked with anticipation. Safely over the little stream your eyes cast about to sight the chalet-style accommodations that dot the expanse. No more than nine of these structures spread across the acreage, each is built of clay walls and straw roofs, which makes a clear statement—The Other Corner (TOC) is all about indulging in the trappings of nature.

The first of the TOC’s structures are two tree houses perched high above in the trees and possess an authentic charm in its appearance. Further along are a swimming pool and an organically farmed vegetable patch labelled with their scientific names—fruits of labour that would serve as supplies for fresh meals at TOC. Trees and greenery are in abundance here. While a forest thicket surround the

property, varieties of trees such as mango and star fruit dot the area. And the fruits of these trees are made into fresh welcome drinks and in true Sri Lankan style, King Coconut water is offered as well.

The Chalets set apart in the shaded niches of TOC are offered as double, triple and family rooms.The family accommodation can house up to seven guests comprising of twin chalets and is ideal for families with teenagers. The Tree House Chalets are raised above ground and sit sturdily on stilt-like structures and timber floors. Along with the rustic features of design, they mark a gentle presence amidst a natural environ. While basic amenities are provided, all chalets are air-conditioned and continuous water supply is ensured with a well located in the premises.

The offerings of the idyllic location and an ardent regard for nature raise TOC above convention. A cool breeze fans across the property and as you walk about, you will often spot the many birds and butterflies that inhabit the area. Taking advantage of the area’s rich biodiversity, TOC offers complimentary services of an in-house naturalist whose enthusiasm and in-depth knowledge will no doubt inspire your curiosity and interest. With about 120 species of birds in and around TOC and over 100 species of butterflies that can be spotted, it is indeed a nature lover’s paradise. You can plan a nature trail around the acreage accompanied by the resourceful naturalist to spot and photograph the many species. If not even time spent relaxing just outside your chalet, can afford sightings more often than not.

A pleasing constant however is the intermittent birdcalls that serve as the only sounds. You might hear the spirited calls of a Faintail or White-browed Bul Bul. At the farther end of the property, venture a short distance into the thicket and you will find yourself surrounded by a multitude of butterfly varieties. TOC has made sure that these winged inhabitants are drawn to the area having nurtured two host plants. These are amongst the many gestures to protect the natural habitat as is the placing of fish owl boxes in the surrounding trees. TOC also arranges safaris to the nearby Minneriya and Kaudulla National Parks and hikes to the ancient Ritigala Monastery in the mountains.

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Keeping with its eco-friendly theme, TOC has preserved as many trees as possible

in the area, so much so that a satinwood tree remains undisturbed as it rises through a Tree House Chalet. Hours of mingling in nature’s delights can leave you with a hearty appetite. While Sri Lankan meals are at the heart of the cuisine, served on either a lotus or banana leaf, choices extend to an international menu.

As a whole—the idyllic surroundings, the quiet breezes and sounds of nature—TOC ensures that you are left in complete serenity. Thereby, it is a sought after getaway not just for nature lovers but for those seeking an ideal place for meditation or yoga practices as well.

At this quiet corner of the world its all about rest, relaxation and nature at its best.

Laksirigama, Habarana

(+94) 77 374 9904

tocsrilanka.com