Eternal Elegance

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The artistry of times past and forgotten embeds such eternal beauty; transcending generations, Senarath Antiques brings to your home this splendour of an age bygone.

Words Dinali Sugathadasa Photographs Mahesh Prasantha

Dealers in antique furniture as well as custom designers of new furniture in antique style; Senarath Antiques deals purely in traditional Sri Lankan interior furnishings. Quite akin to the coveted antiques which they bring to their clientele, passed down from father to son and now a legacy in the hands of the second generation, the enterprise is going strong managed by Thushara Priyantha.

An initial visit to the showrooms leaves us seated on a grand tamarind wood settee whilst surrounded by some very rare pieces of time honoured local furniture. On our left is the most vibrant table bureau painted in traditional artwork, on our right is a hefty down south pettagama (trunk) topped by the most exquisite decorative mirror adorned in elephant bone carvings while all around us is an exhaustive collection of antique furniture in mint condition. From satinwood bureaus with ebony carvings, centre sets, beds and settees engraved with intricate native designs our eyes beheld interior ware ranging up to as old as 75 to a 100 years.

Senarath Antiques is more than just another commercial venture. It is an endeavour to revive a uniquely Sri Lankan antiques market now clut- tered with imports from regions such as China, Indonesia, Malaysia and India. “Many Sri Lankans have never glimpsed such items as our ethnic carving masterpieces, ebony work and artwork. My future hope is to make all this available under one roof and give the people an opportunity to purchase them,” says Thushara.

Both revival and reproduction of traditional furniture is done using the best timber in the Island and Senarath Antiques has earned for itself a trusted reputation in over 25 years of service with zero customer complaints, and Thushara proudly credits this achievement to their precision in quality.

While they export to almost every country in the world, Senarath An- tiques strictly abides by certain busi- ness principles in order to safeguard the cultural heritage of the Island never moving local masterpieces into the foreign market and selling them solely within Sri Lanka.

Appealing to his customers to value local products and not remit their money to foreign countries, the young entrepreneur notes, “through that Sri Lanka can develop itself. We need to experience the beauty we possess.”

“A thing of beauty isa joy forever,” and such is the possession of an antique, and more so a masterwork rooted in our own traditions to be passed on for generations to come.

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