Galle Face Hotel: A Timeless Icon

Posted on



The façade of Galle Face Hotel gleaming gloriously

Amidst the serene blue of the ocean and sky, gently swaying palms and bustling streets, the ‘Grande Dame of South Asia’ looms into view. A charming edifice that gleams with the lustre of its majestic past.

Words Keshini de Silva

Smooth arches, balustrades, long passageways and majestic doorways, the Galle Face Hotel charismatically embodies Sri Lanka’s colonial legacy. Each passageway provides the guest a glimpse of the island’s colourful culture, historical feats and ageless traditions. Art of all forms as well as sepia-toned photographs animate the demure walls. Timber staircases and vibrant rugs imbue the spaces with an aura of grandeur. The varying interpretations of colonial Dutch furniture add character to the hotel landings and sitting rooms.

An iconic feature of Colombo’s identity, the Galle Face Hotel treats guests with the same warmth and hospitality it did in 1864, the year the hotel was established. There are smiles all around, an eager hand to help and a general quality of staff doing their best to ensure your experience at the hotel is a pleasant one. The hotel’s location in the very heart of the bustling city, provides guests convenience, be it for business or pleasure.



The charismatic Grand Ballroom is lavish and awe-inspiring

Cuisine is definitely one of the most important highlights of the GFH, whether you are a guest staying at the hotel or are stopping by to dine in a hearty meal. The Verandah overlooking the picturesque Indian Ocean is the hotel’s all-day dining restaurant. The restaurant evokes a sense of colonial charm in a tropical atmosphere that appeals to guests throughout the day. The restaurant serves a range of flavours from across the world and from the island. High Tea at The Verandah proves to be a delightful and delicious experience.

Sea Spray – the latest restaurant at the hotel to get a face lift, serves a wonderful spread of seafood cuisine. In its Mediterranean and comfortable setting, the diners can feast on the freshest seafood prepared by expert chefs to suit many a palette; and a wholesome express lunch spread. 1864 – the hotel’s most celebrated fine dining restaurant, provides a romantic ambience with subtle lighting and delicate furnishings. The restaurant boasts its own wine cellar, which diners can tour, hosting a degustation that complements the restaurant’s exquisitely prepared dishes. The Travellers Bar echoes the feel of a colonial cigar lounge, plush and filled with the aura of the past. The pool bar has a relaxing vibe and is an especially eclectic place to enjoy a beverage at sundown. The pool, the only salt water pool in Colombo, is a tradition the hotel has diligently maintained since colonial times. The serene Chequerboard and pulsating Inn on the Green pub are favourite evening and nighttime lounging venues.



The 1864 restaurant has a romantic and cosy ambience

With timber finishes and lavishly decorated with utmost elegance, the accommodation at the Galle Face hotel is charming and comfortable. They have magnificent Superior Rooms and Landmark Rooms that combine the modern and classical and also Premier Rooms offering sea views. A timeless tone lingers in the sumptuous Junior Suites, which are ideal for families. The seven Heritage Suites at the hotel are each furnished with its own distinctive character.

While all of the Heritage Suites promise quite luxurious comforts, the experience in each is diverse; the Empress Suite with its opulent décor probably being the grandest suite of them all. It is after all named after Empress Eugenie, wife of Napoleon III, Emperor of France, once a guest at the Galle Face Hotel. She adds to the colourful list of guests who have stayed at the hotel over its more than 150 years of existence, where the royalty, authors and celebrities such as Harrison Ford as well as Steven Spielberg were hosted. The hotel museum too retells this illustrious legacy, its hallmark is the first car of HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh.



The Galle Face Hotel embodies the Island’s colonial legacy

The charismatic architecture and enchanting ocean backdrop, makes Galle Face Hotel popular for weddings. The two ballrooms with Victorian grandeur create a lovely and poetic backdrop for a couple’s special day, while the lawn scented by the sea spray is a mesmerising location to make lasting memories.

At the Galle Face Hotel, which radiates a stately opulence, one is entreated to a warm, inspiring and unforgettable experience.

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