

Gaming Entertainment in a Resort Setting: The Coral Club Casino



An hour's drive further down Galle Road from Bentota, or a 2½ hour journey from Colombo will bring you to the holiday hamlet of Hikkaduwa, long a favourite destination for pleasure-seeking visitors to Sri Lanka's shores. Although tourists vacationing on the southwest coast for the most part come to enjoy the sun, surf, sand, spectacular sunsets and all the other attractions one normally associates with a tropical resort area, there is now a new attraction to lure visitors down the coast and away from the cosy cocoons of their air-conditioned hotel rooms.

The only international-class casino south of Colombo has recently been opened in Hikkaduwa: the Coral Club Casino, located within the premises of the Coral Gardens Hotel, the most luxurious resort hotel in the area. And what the Coral Club Casino promises you-and delivers-is unrivalled gaming action amid an elegant environment. However, the atmosphere not formal rather it is relaxed and casual befits a place to come for fun and good times. The club captures European excellence in gaming standards and decor yet manages to retain a carefree ambience to complement your holiday by the beach.

There is no entrance charge, and an extra plus for guests at the Coral Gardens Hotel is that on check-in you will receive two vouchers redeemable at the Coral Club's reception for a total of Rs. 400 m free play coupons: the first Rs. 200 in coupons are for play the evening of your arrival and the second Rs. 200 can be utilized at any time during the remainder of your stay.

To reach the casino from within the hotel, pass through the Blue Lounge and make your entrance through the glass doors at the far end. A plushly carpeted and richly curtained corridor leads you to the reception desk, where you receive your coupons, and then on into the main gaming room in which sparkling chandeliers gracefully embellish the central mirror-glass ceiling and blaze brilliantly over the baize of seven gaming tables. All the equipment from the stacks of multi-coloured chips to the immaculate layouts is brand new and in beautiful condition, and the comfortably cushioned chairs and stools around the tables beckon you to take your seat and join the action.

If you elect to start off at one of the two Roulette tables, you will find that the layouts have only one zero which decreases the house advantage and consequently increases your chances of winning. The smartly attired croupiers are efficient and friendly and will be pleased to answer any questions you may have about the betting structure or rules of the game and provide you with a special card to keep track of the numbers that come up.

Or if Baccarat is your preferred game, two tables are available for your playing pleasure. At your option you can also play Baccarat with no commission being charged on the banker's winnings bets but in this case the banker wins half payment on 6. Again, the well-trained dealers will gladly answer any of your queries regarding the game and give you a card on which to chart out how the play is progressing. Your other choice of game in the room is Blackjack with three tables to select from. The rules are extremely favourable and much more liberal than in casinos in other parts of the world. At the Coral Club's tables you can double down on any two cards, resplit aces any number of times, surrender on any number of cards and late surrender against an ace if the dealer doesn't have a Blackjack; and you will receive automatic full payment if you pull six cards even if the dealer has an ace.

A short passageway leading you past the cashier's cage takes you into the second gaming room (which if you are coming into the Club from the street entrance is the first room you will encounter). This area features not only Blackjack and Roulette but also has a Poker table in the far corner for those who want to ante up at one of America's most popular card games. When the table is in operation, it's dealer's choice and you can play any of the well-known Poker , variations including Draw, Hold 'Em and five and seven card Stud.

Wherever you are playing in the two tastefully appointed rooms, one of the many attentive serving staff plying the tables is sure to quickly find you to take your order for whatever drink you fancy. The exceptionally well-provisioned bar offers you a v.i.de choice of premium drinks and quality cocktails which are all on the house, as are cigarettes and little snacks such as cashews to nibble on if you wish.

Although the majority of the Club's clientele are staying in the Coral Gardens Hotel, the club is by no means the exclusive preserve of these guests. Indeed not. Day-trippers and holiday-makers from up and down the coast-from the Bentota area in the north co as far south as Galle and even as far away as Colombo-are drawn to the Club. As an added bonus to attract visitors, most of the major hotels and better restaurants located in the surrounding area along Galle Road have been given vouchers good for Rs. 200 m free-play coupons at the Club to issue to their guests. The Club will also provide complimentary transport, whenever possible, to ferry guests between their hotels or residences and the Club. Just ask at your hotel or call the Coral Gardens reception at (09)23023 or 22181 for further information on getting transport. Whether you are vacationing in the Bentota Beach Resort area, heading down from Colombo to Hikkaduwa for a holiday or coming up the coast from Galle, now there is ample reason to make a stop at the Coral Gardens Hotel whether your plans include staying there or not. With the Coral Club Casino's classy decor, meticulous service and excellent gaming facilities with optimum opportunities for winning at the tables, you can spend a pleasurable afternoon or evening after evening of fascinating entertainment there. The Club is open daily (except full-moon Poya Day) from p.m. to 3 a.m. -what are you waiting for? Drop by and experience for yourself the enjoyment to be had at this unique gaming establishment in a resort setting-there is no other casino in Sri l.anka like it.



Blackjack is a great favourite among the younger generation of players.