

Heritance Kandalama: Best of Both Worlds

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Heritance Kandalama at dusk

Draped in greenery, Heritance Kandalama 'hides out' in the rocky mountainside of Dambulla as it sits in the form of the outspread wings of a bird. Since 1994, the hotel has sustained its presence as a symbol of architecture and splendour. More recently Heritance Kandalama offers up a breadth of facilities for business travellers.

Words Prasadini Nanayakkara **Photographs** Indika De Silva

Along the approach to Heritance Kandalama, you are sure to be gripped with an

elevation of spirits as the lake waters come into view along with the first glimpse of the hotel. Although a sculptured structure of one kilometre in length, Heritance Kandalama sits unobtrusively as though an extension of the very rock that it sits upon. Heavily veiled in greenery the hotel seems to sit effortlessly in its untamed bearings—a design by the late Geoffrey Bawa, it is famed for its ingenuity. Fanned by the cool winds that sail over the lake waters, warm smiles and greetings usher you into the cool interiors. Stepping over the threshold it strikes home just how closely intertwined Heritance Kandalama is with its rugged terrain. This is made demonstrably clear along the length of the passageway to the lobby that reveals part of an encroaching rock face.

Bestowed with the unrestrained charms of nature, the hotel offers up ample means for comfort and leisure within its vast expanse. Outside of leisure and recreation however, Heritance Kandalama presents a portfolio of facilities that positions the property as a state-of-the-art conference hub as well. While the hotel's tranquil setting serves well with undisturbed hours for business affairs, accommodated within are six spaces that can be configured for a range of options as the need arises. Anything from intimate meetings to complex settings for seminars and conferences, these spaces can accommodate multiple configurations with seating capacities that range between 20 to 350. For instance the newly instated main conference hall 'Kathikawa' with its maximum capacity of 350, can host multiple seating layouts, be it for a reception function or board room meeting.

Similarly, Kasyapa is a secondary hall, that can accommodate up to 250 guests with a buffet accommodated outdoors. For a more intimate setting, four break up rooms with a range of capacities are housed at the ground floor and each of these facilities are suitably supplied with multimedia facilities provided on request. Although Heritance Kandalama retreats into the seclusion of nature, quick and hassle-free transfers to the hotel can be had with grounds located nearby for helicopter landing and take-off.

Dining options are aplenty at Heritance Kandalama with primarily the main restaurant, 'Kanchana', that holds a capacity of 180 covers, serving buffet style meals. Adjacent is an outdoor 'cave dining' option for a touch of novelty. Seven different theme nights are held at the restaurant to infuse an eclectic versatility to the cuisine served. The Kaludiya restaurant invite the indulgent diner to experience a global gastronomical journey with its fusion menu.

Guests can strike a balance as they mix business and pleasure with creature

comforts to indulge in. Heritance Kandalama houses seven floors with the approach leading on to the fifth floor. Hereon you are made to feel at home at the Café Kachchan that opens out to the outdoors. Unwinding here is a treat as the view overlooks an infinity pool with an illusory appearance of merging with the Kandalama lake in the distance. Facing the vast expanse of the Kandalama lake and surrounded by a mountainous landscape, Heritance Kandalama is surrounded with panoramic vistas. Flanked by two UNESCO heritage sites, the Sigiriya Rock Fortress and the Dambulla Cave temples, the two wings of the hotel are aptly named Sigiriya Wing and Dambulla Wing.

After a long day you can retreat into the comforting and quiet confines of the rooms, which are available in eight categories. Amongst a total of 152 rooms are 30 deluxe rooms, two luxury suites and an elegant royal suite that ignites a feeling of nostalgia. Timber floors of the rooms add to an authentic charm with enviable views, as the rooms sit in close proximity to nature. While the rooms are furnished with every comfort imaginable, guests can also avail of a 24-hour room service. Deluxe rooms with either twin-sharing or king-sized beds have added luxury of a jacuzzi and rain shower installed to unwind in, while gazing across the soothing vistas.

While the rooms are located across the two wings, it is the rooms of the Sigiriya wing that afford the more enviable views with the rock fortress poised in the distance beyond the Kandalama lake waters.

Many hours can be spent ambling along the airy passageways, straying your feet on the manicured garden expanses or simply taking a dip in one of the three swimming pools located around the premises. As dusk settles you can sit along a grassy terrace, unwinding with your choice of beverage, as a lone flautist stirs the quiet air with his haunting melody.

If a spot of adventure, a little diversion and healthy exertion strikes your fancy, excursions, hot air balloon rides, elephant and horse rides can also be arranged on request. And if simply enjoying a view of the Sigiriya fortress seems inadequate, the heritage site is just 32 km away to get better acquainted. Whatever your whim and fancy, Heritance Kandalama is ready to indulge.

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heritancehotels.com/kandalama/

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