In The Shade Of The Palms

Posted on

Thalsevana facing the Indian Ocean in KKS

Pristine white walls contrast beautifully against the clear blue sky, through shady trees we walk and arrive on the sandy beach of Kankasanthurai…

Along the gravel road we drive towards a building camouflaged, seemingly one with nature. The roaring wind from land to sea is almost intentional as Chundikulam engulfed us….

Two vastly different properties in very distinct environments exemplifies what Sri Lankan hospitality truly means. In the shade of the palms at Thalsevana Holiday Resort, Kankasanthurai and Nature Park Holiday

Resort, Chundikkulam provide a truly unique experience.

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Thalsevana Holiday Resort

Situated within the environs of the Security Forces Headquarters in Kankasanthurai (KKS), Thalsevana Holiday Resort was initially a place for Officers to rest and relax. However, with time Thalsevana opened its arms to the families of Officers and subsequently to the general public providing suitable accommodation to those visiting Jaffna.

From Thalsevana, KKS we travelled via the A9 from which we turned at Iyakachchi junction at Elephant pass to reach nature park holiday resort in chundikkulam

The location itself is breathtaking as the resort is located on the KKS coast. “You do not find places of this nature in Jaffna. You can have a sea bath as the beach is totally private, the scenery is amazing but most importantly there is security,” explained Maj Gen Mahinda Hathurusinghe, Security Forces Commander – Jaffna, the person who has made Thalsevana a reality.

Originally the KKS Rest House, Thalsevana has maintained its heritage through careful expansion where the reception and restaurant are of the early building and the rooms have been newly constructed. The design of the resort is simple yet elegant where the white walls and red cement floors create a sense of openness. Furthermore, as Maj Gen Hathurusinghe explained, “when everything is white, you have to keep it clean. Cleanliness is a priority at Thalsevana. Therefore, if anything is wrong we can quickly see it and rectify the problem.”

The reception and the restaurant open out to the golden white sands of KKS. The Indian Ocean is right in front of you. Except for the wind there is no noise, only peace and tranquillity. Three pavilions have been built outside for guests to enjoy the unique atmosphere of KKS.

All staff at Thalsevana are from the Sri Lanka Army, and this has entailed good discipline, tidiness and punctuality

The two storey new wing consists of nine rooms. This includes the Royal Suite for VVIPs and the deluxe double rooms which have been named after a variety of

flowers such as Jasmine, Orchid, Rose, Lily, Lotus, Anthurium, Daffodil and Bougainvillea. The elegantly furnished rooms come with a plasma TV and instrumental music can be provided on request to soothe the weary traveller.

It is apparent that the natural environment has been given prominence where the simple courtyard is landscaped with the characteristic Jaffna limestone. Large open corridors provide an unrestricted path for a fresh breeze to flow through.

Thalsevana II consists of 24 rooms constructed using prefabricated material; the rooms are large and spacious and there is one that can accommodate up to six people. However, the future plan is to design permanent rooms according to the overall theme of the resort thereby maintaining its unique ambience.

Tranquillity and Peace are the two cabanas situated a short distance away from Thalsevana II. To get there you have to walk along the sandy beach on to the neatly manicured lawns of the two cabanas. Each cabana can house two adults and two children. A small kitchenette and a mini bar complete each of the cabanas. Furthermore, plasma TVs have also been placed within.

The cuisine at Thalsevana is exquisite and the servings are generous. Sri Lankan food is their forte though an à la carte menu for western food is also available. Seafood is the main feature of the Sri Lankan menu as northern seas are a source of good seafood. The chef is fully qualified and the staff are well trained. All staff at Thalsevana are from the Sri Lanka Army, and this has entailed good discipline, tidiness and punctuality. Their hospitality and warmth are genuine and guests do not feel that the resort is managed by the Army. Always with a friendly smile the service at Thalsevana is impeccable.

A unique aspect of Thalsevana is that it has a walking track that runs along a section of the property, passing the KKS lighthouse

Another unique aspect of Thalsevana is that it comes with a walking track that runs along a section of the property, passing the KKS lighthouse. As you walk along the track it takes you through two bridges; one is a normal one and the other is a sangili palama and once you get off the bridge you still feel as if you are bouncing along the track! The walk is picturesque to say the least. An entire façade of a warehouse has been painted with murals done by the soldiers of the various regiments and divisions. Along the path you pass the KKS harbour in the distance, piers destroyed during the tsunami and a calm and serene bathing spot. The walking track had been

the brainchild of Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

Maj Gen Hathurusinghe explained that in the near future a clubhouse will be built on the premises, which will include a spa, saloon, gym and bar. “His Excellency President Mahinda Rajapksa during one of his visits suggested that a clubhouse should be built and as such we are now at the initial planning stages,” said Maj Gen Hathurusinghe.

Though Thalsevana has remained a little secret, many local and foreign tourists have visited the resort as news of its excellence has spread through word of mouth. Thalsevana is situated in a convenient location and guests can easily visit the many historical sites in the vicinity. Furthermore, various water sports too can be organised by the resort. With Nature Park Holiday Resort being opened in scenic Chundikkulam recently, tourist packages will be arranged in the near future.

As the calypso band performed songs from the various eras, the sun receded into the ocean bidding adieu to the day. As we relaxed on the sandy beach mesmerised by the tranquillitiy… you could not help but feel at home…

In Chundikkulum… Nature Park Holiday Resort

Opened in January 2012, Nature Park Holiday Resort in Chundikkulam is completely different from Thalsevana. The green buildings are completely one with nature – maybe that is how its name has come about. It is situated with the Chundikkulam bird sanctuary, which is located in the southeastern tip of the Jaffna peninsula bordering the sea and lagoon fronts of Elephant Pass.

What is unique about this place is that from one side you can see the massive lake and on the other, the sea. The terrain changes from where one side is green and the other is the characteristic sandy soil.

“Nature Park Holiday Resort has a different atmosphere. It is for those who love nature and are interested in bird watching. If a guest wishes to go to the sea they can do that too. This place is out of the world,” explained Maj Gen Hathurusinghe.

“When everything is white, you have to keep it clean. Cleanliness is a priority at Thalsevana”

The setting is quite picturesque with a boat house built over the lake. This is connected to the mainland by a bridge made out of the trunk of the palmyrah tree.

Though generally windy, it was exceptionally windy on that day. The main building is such that it is open to the elements. This consists of the lobby, restaurant and bar. The menu at the restaurant serves a variety of dishes to cater to both local and foreign palates.

Accommodation is provided in two ways; one is the cottage where there are two bedrooms, a dining room and a hall. This is suitable for a family or a large group. Food is arranged from the main kitchen. Then there are eight separate rooms, which have been constructed with prefabricated material. The entire design of the holiday resort is to ensure that guests are truly one with the environment. The bathrooms in the eight separate rooms are open air, thus providing the night sky as the roof. There are no corridors connecting the buildings. The pathways wind through neatly landscaped gardens that are not artificial but in line with the surrounding environment.

The lake is engulfed by birds and it is said that up to four crocodiles can be seen basking in the sun on the banks of the lake. With guides who were familiar with the terrain we walked along the lake into the Chundikkulam Sanctuary. There are many lakes situated within and we were able to go by foot to one other. Aquatic birds are predominant. However, domesticated cattle fromsurrounding villages create a harmonious relationship between the two.

Nature Park Holiday Resort is a nature lover’s paradise. It is for a holiday of quiet solitude.

Approximately five minutes away from the resort is a beach cabana belonging to the same where guests can have a beach party or a BBQ.

Nature Park Holiday Resort is managed by the 55 Division of the Sri Lanka Army. As with Thalsevana, here too the staff are from the Army. This has resulted in a secure environment where guests can enjoy themselves with complete peace of mind. This holiday resort in Chundikkulam provides a good place to stay for those who wish to visit Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi and even Jaffna.

Two uniquely different places bound together by a common goal of providing hospitality to visitors to the North in truly Sri Lankan style in the comforting shades of the palm…

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