

Ishq Colombo: A Hidden Sanctuary of Soulful Luxury in the Heart of the City

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Posted on

Ishq Colombo is more than a tale of architecture and design — it's a relaxed, indulgent home away from home, offering privacy and seclusion just steps from the bustling street beyond.

Words Jennifer Paldano Goonewardane.



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Some of the most beautiful places are hidden in plain sight, revealing themselves slowly—each space a thoughtful composition of a designer’s vision and a patron’s passion. Ishq Colombo is enchanting in precisely that way. Tucked into one of Colombo’s most refined suburbs, its modest façade gives little away. A long cobbled path leads to this artistic sanctuary—once a private family residence, now a boutique hotel— where every detail reflects the creative sensibility of its owner and the architectural finesse of Channa Daswatta. Echoes of Geoffrey Bawa resonate through the villa’s courtyards and verandahs, where open-plan spaces embrace natural light, cross-ventilation, and passive cooling. Verdant views and seamless indoor-outdoor transitions create a tranquil retreat that feels worlds apart. With its understated design and quiet luxury, Ishq Colombo is a masterclass in elegance and restraint.

The L-shaped residence seamlessly blurs the boundaries between indoors and out. Designed with an open floor plan, the home invites nature in, creating a harmonious flow between its interior spaces and the surrounding environment. The often-used phrase oasis in the city finds its true meaning at Ishq Colombo, where there is no hidden “back-of-house”—every corner of the property is designed to be part of a unified whole, built around a central courtyard that serves as its heart.

This courtyard becomes the villa’s focal point, anchoring an expansive open sitting area—a long hall evocative of the grand audience chambers of Sri Lanka’s Kandyan Kingdom. Flanked by a serene swimming pool on one side and the courtyard on the other, the space is framed by stately timber pillars and a rich timber ceiling that lend it warmth and solemnness. The owners intentionally used kabok—a natural, unburnt earth material—for its authenticity and environmental sensitivity. Timber accents enhance the villa’s charm, from the floors and structural details to an upper level lined with louvered timber windows, where antique and contemporary furnishings live in elegant harmony.

The interior décor truly brings Ishq Colombo to life. Carefully curated by its owners, every corner tells a story through an eclectic mix of collectibles, curios, and refined furnishings that reflect the spirit on which this sanctuary was created. Rich with personality, the interiors embrace Moroccan artistry and craftsmanship, showcasing deep-rooted cultural traditions and an appreciation for the handmade.

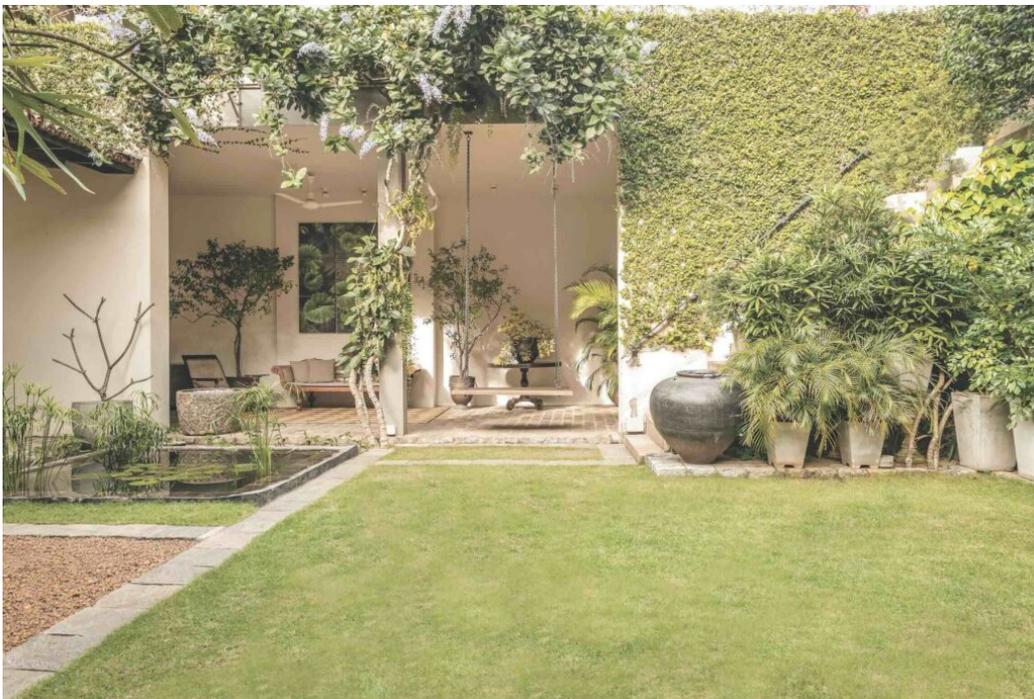
A love for carpets is unmistakable— vibrant tapestries and handwoven rugs infuse each space with warmth and texture. No two are alike, yet all share a quiet elegance that adapts effortlessly, whether under a coffee table, in a lounge corner,

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in a suite, or anchoring a formal drawing room. Lampshades—each thoughtfully chosen—add intimacy and charm. At the same time, elements of Sufism appear in subtle yet powerful ways, from the imposing pillars to evocative paintings and wall hangings, merging artistic expression with spiritual depth.

The villa's courtyards are sanctuaries— where privacy and serenity intertwine. Designed to shield against the outside world, the villa exudes a rare stillness; its architecture absorbs and softens external sound, enhancing the atmosphere of peace. Above the courtyard, a lush roof terrace connects to the three upper suites—two Master bedrooms and a Corner Suite—each with its own private escape nestled in greenery. These terraces invite solitude, shaded reading, or simply sipping warm Ceylon tea beneath the sun-dappled foliage.

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A tranquil courtyard bathed in gentle sunlight, exuding serenity and peace.

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Timeless design. Curated detail. Ishq Colombo is where architecture becomes art.

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The Lounge on the upper floor and the open hall on the ground floor showcase design, detail, and a luxurious use of space.

The suites are airy and expansive, continuing the villa's open concept and filled with natural light. The guest pool suite on the ground floor opens directly to the tranquil pool. Every suite is fitted with modern comforts and luxurious bath amenities, yet each remains distinct—furnished with individual flair, personal book collections, and a style that's both tropical and deeply comforting.

With no defined back-of-house, Ishq Colombo invites guests to feel completely at ease—free to wander through its serene spaces, linger in the pantry, watch the chef craft a fragrant dhal curry, or sink into a book in the quiet of the library or one of the villa's tranquil courtyards. This open, unpretentious spirit defines the way Ishq is run: a place where hospitality flows effortlessly, every amenity is close at hand, and every meal is just a thoughtful request away.

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At Ishq, service comes straight from the heart. It is deeply personal—rooted in the fact that Ishq is more than a hotel; it is also home to the team that lovingly runs it. Their pride in what they offer is palpable, and it shows in the warmth and authenticity extended to every guest. The goal isn't just comfort but connection—to offer a taste of Sri Lankan culture wrapped in the embrace of a home where service is sincere and deeply felt.

The villa also features a beautifully intimate private dining room for fourteen, available for small gatherings or private events. In-house guests and visitors can indulge in English High Tea or choose from curated Sri Lankan delicacies. The culinary experience is a highlight—thanks to a skilled team of chefs, guests can savor everything from traditional home-style cuisine to indulgent seafood platters and perfectly grilled steaks.

What makes Ishq especially unique is the unobtrusive nature of its service. Staff are always present and attentive, yet never intrusive, respecting the peaceful, private atmosphere that defines the villa. Ishq Colombo is for those who value true seclusion, quiet luxury, and the feeling of being gently enveloped in comfort, far removed from the rush of the outside world.

“The ethos behind Ishq is to run it as a home,” says Isabel Jamaldeen, Head of Villas. To her and her team, Ishq Colombo is far more than a boutique hotel—a living space designed to make guests feel instantly at ease, embraced, and connected. It's about creating a sense of belonging within a two-story haven that gracefully revolves around a tranquil central courtyard, where hospitality is heartfelt and togetherness is woven into every detail.

This harmony mirrors the spirit of Colombo itself—Sri Lanka's dynamic capital, rich in layers of history shaped by kings, colonists, merchants, and migrants.

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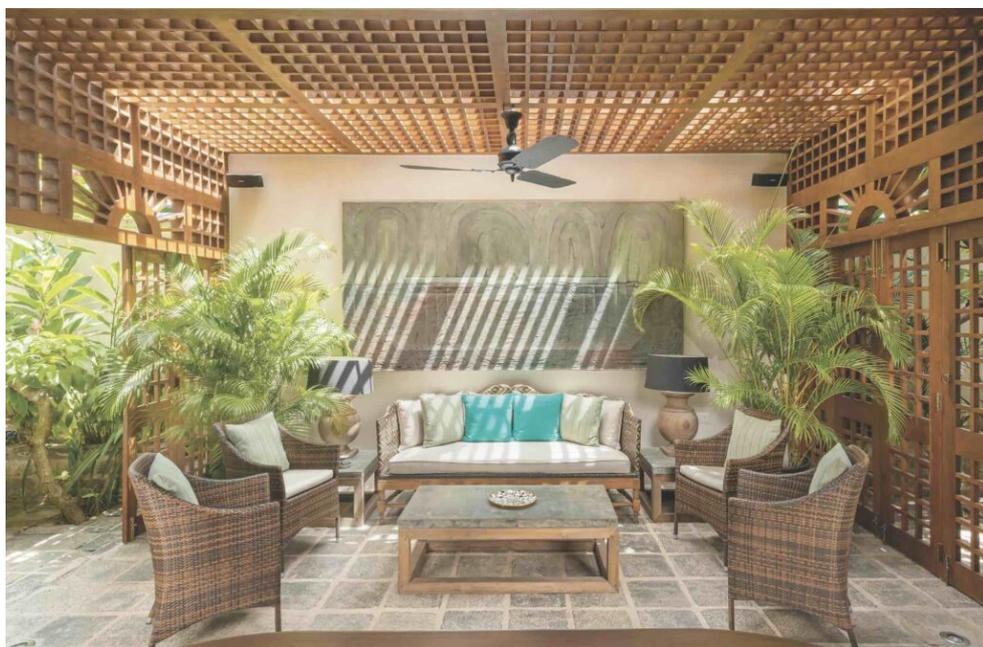


Master Suite 1.

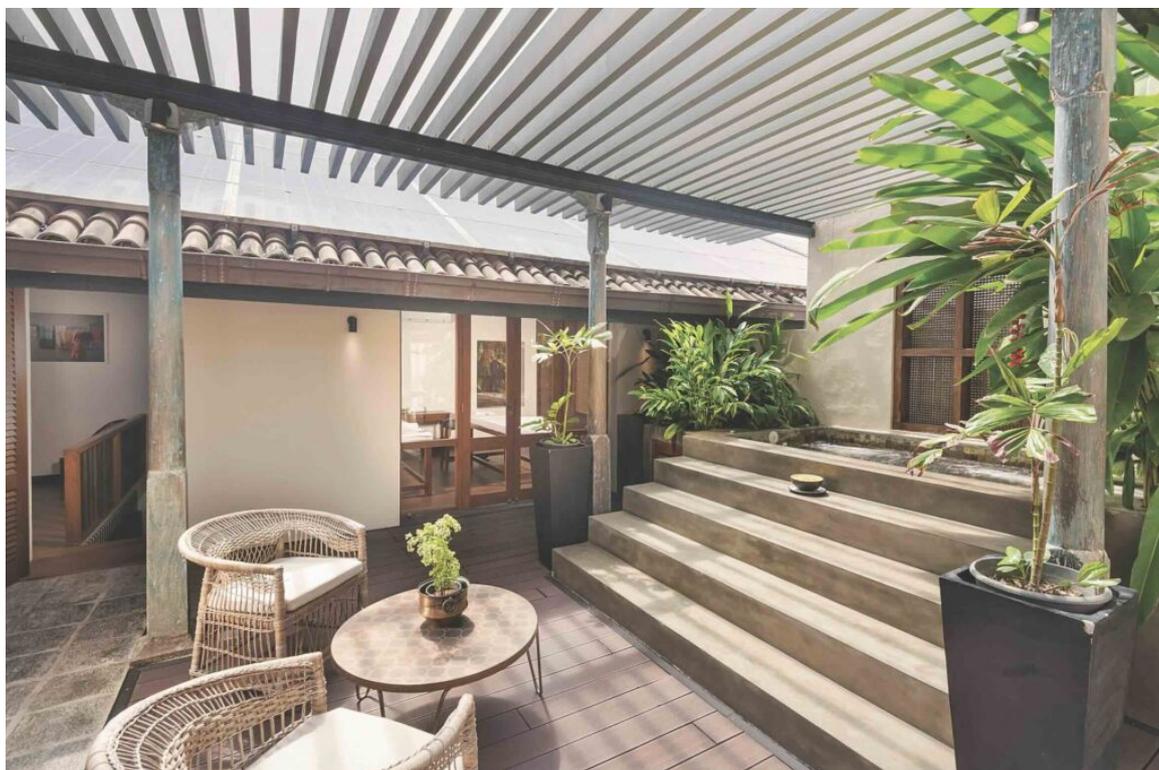


Master Suite 2.

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A radiant inner courtyard, illuminated by the warm embrace of natural light.



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Golden light blending with tranquility as you relax in a jacuzzi—your oasis in nature’s beauty



The library is a cozy corner to relax with a book and a cup of tea.

A city that pulses with the vibrancy of tradition and the rhythm of modern life, Colombo is a melting pot of culture, cuisine, and community. It tells the story of a nation through its bustling streets, colonial relics, vibrant markets, and the daily lives of its multi-ethnic, multi-religious inhabitants. To experience Colombo is to understand the island’s soul.

Ishq Colombo captures this essence while offering curated experiences beyond the ordinary. Guests are invited to explore the city’s landmarks and markets, indulge in tea tastings and food pairings, unwind with a yoga session, or visit the spa. Situated just minutes from Colombo’s top attractions, Ishq is an ideal sanctuary for those wanting to immerse themselves in the city’s many layers without sacrificing peace

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and privacy.

And for a truly local experience? Hop into a tuk-tuk—the island’s most iconic mode of transport. It’s fast, fun, and guaranteed to reveal hidden corners of the city you might otherwise miss. At Ishq Colombo, you don’t just stay in the city— you feel, taste, and carry it with you.

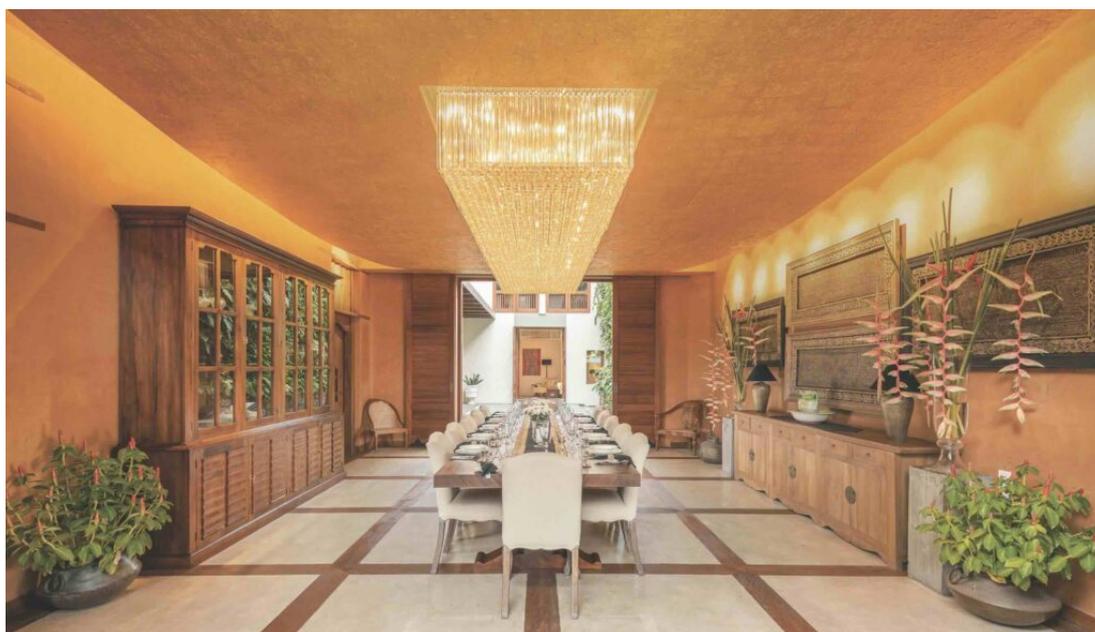
Ishq Colombo

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A private dining room for fourteen. Designed for unforgettable gatherings.

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The Guest Pool Suite offers a perfect blend of poolside views and refined comfort.



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A serene escape - the garden terrace at Ishq Colombo