

Lasalu Collections: Where Tradition Finds a Revival

Posted on

Lasalu Collections is dedicated to reviving the age-old tradition of handloom weaving, blending family heritage with a commitment to preserving Sri Lanka's craft artistry for future generations.

Words: Jennifer Paldano Goonewardane.



Woven by hand, each thread carries heritage and memory.

Returning to one's roots evokes nostalgia and sentiment, but reviving heritage crafts demands more than passion. It requires determination, perseverance, and a commitment that goes beyond profit.

The Wijesinghe family is fueled by love for traditional craft. Led by Lalantha, with sister Chintha and daughter Asha, they carefully built Lasalu Collections from their Pannala home. Each handloom piece is created slowly and meticulously, aiming to preserve an age-old skill for the future. Their work springs from decades of family history.

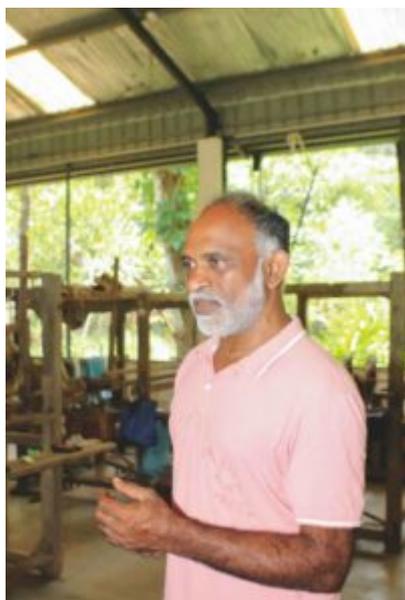


Hand-dyed fabrics in quiet drying, blending color and craft.

Their venture began at their Maha Gedara, the family home, which they turned into both a production facility and a shop. Their clear goal: to show that handloom weaving remains beautiful and meaningful, connecting heritage with contemporary relevance.

In 1962, Lalantha's mother— trained in traditional handloom—started a weaving operation in Ampara after marrying and moving there. Leaving school early, she learned weaving in Pannala and developed a strong skill. With 16 looms and operators, she produced handloom fabric and trained local women.

Lalantha credits her with laying the foundations of Ampara's handloom industry. However, in the early 1980s, after their father's assignment was completed, the family left Ampara, returned to Pannala, and closed their mother's handloom enterprise. Through their mother's work, handloom weaving became part of their heritage. They grew up watching her at the loom, patiently passing the craft to women in their community.



Lalantha Wijesinghe.

The family's connection to the craft continued through Lalantha's sister, Chintha, who served for 20 years as a government handloom instructor. Lalantha pursued textile engineering at the University of Moratuwa and went on to work for two decades in the industrial textile sector, gaining valuable technical expertise and a deep understanding of global textile standards.

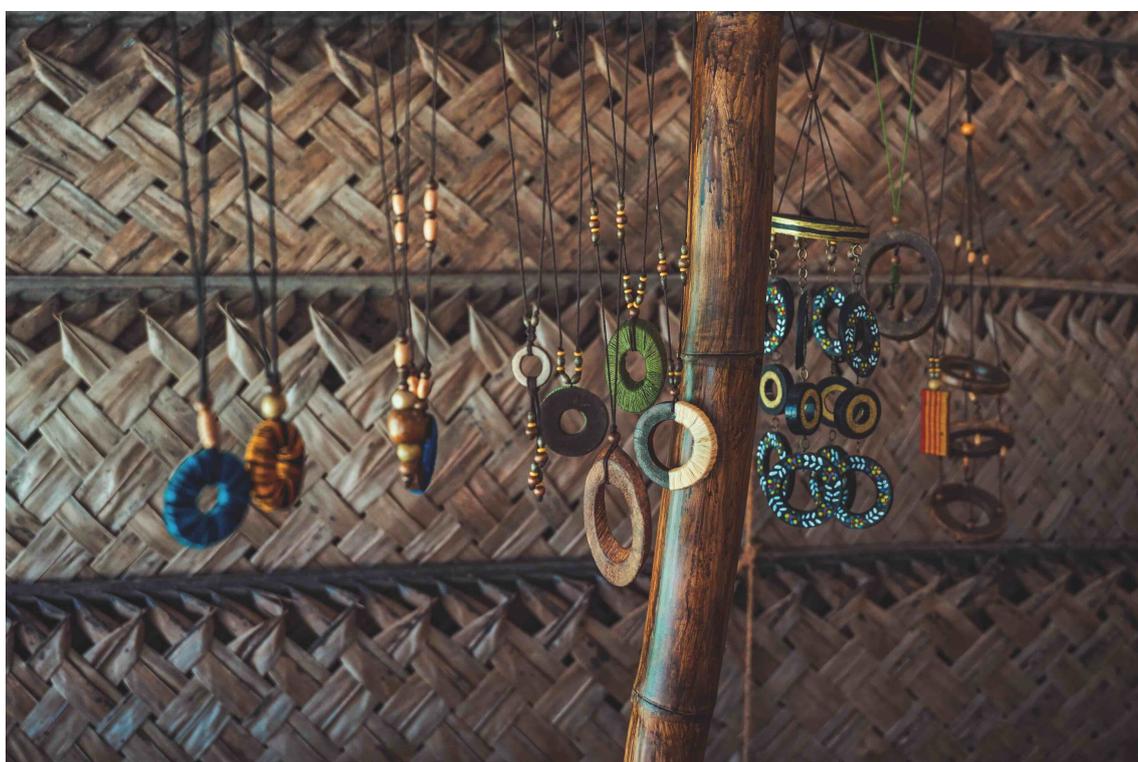


Where nature meets craft, in every detail.



A soft glow, carrying nature's imprint.

Years later, Lalantha and Chintha left their careers to revive this tradition. Perhaps their parents' passing stirred this desire. In 2012, they founded Lasalu Handlooms, weaving textiles for saris, garments, and linen. Their venture began at their Maha Gedara, the family home, which they turned into both a production facility and a shop. Their clear goal: to show that handloom weaving remains beautiful and meaningful, connecting heritage with contemporary relevance.



Crafted by hand, inspired by nature.

To honor this vision, Lalantha went as far as sourcing manually operated wooden looms from Ukuwela in Matale—an area where the handloom industry had once flourished. As some weaving families gradually stepped away from the craft, their looms lay silent. To Lalantha, these were not merely machines, but treasured remnants of a tradition worth preserving. Through them, he hoped to return to the slow and unhurried rhythm of the old days. At the hand-operated loom, the weaver's hands and feet move with rhythmic precision. The process is almost meditative, where each textile develops in harmony with the artisan's mood. Every thread carries human warmth, and within each pattern lies the presence of the individual who wove it.



Preparing the thread before it becomes fabric.



Threads of many colors, ready for the loom.

In this way, the name Lasalu beautifully reflects the ethos of their work—“La,” meaning light or tender, and “Salu,” meaning cloth—capturing their intention to create textiles that feel soft, gentle, and comforting. As Lalantha’s daughter, Asha, gradually stepped into operations, the venture began to evolve. In the latter part of

2025, the enterprise underwent a gentle reawakening, rebranding as Lasalu Collections. With Asha's fresh perspective, the business was thoughtfully reimagined, expanding beyond its earlier focus to include a broader repertoire of practical, versatile pieces. This marks the beginning of a new and promising chapter. The operation now includes three main sections: preparation (from yarn to warping), weaving, and printing/dyeing.



Hands in motion, weaving tradition into every thread.

Today, the range includes shawls, bags, bookmarks, key tags, and garments, with a focus on soft fabrics. Among them, the shawls stand out for their exceptional softness, lightness for warm weather, and soothing touch. Their quiet, elegant designs often feature nature-inspired leaf motifs, reflecting the brand's lasting commitment to finding beauty and inspiration in the environment. To preserve these techniques, visitors are invited to witness and participate in the process.



Sharing the craft—connecting visitors with tradition.



Experiencing the journey behind every handwoven piece.

The studio offers workshops—including for tourists—where guests can weave, learn dyeing, and create fabric inspired by nature. These experiences foster connection rather than conventional marketing, letting guests discover the therapeutic and educational aspects of handloom weaving. Their color palette reflects nature’s shapes and tones, from sunsets to detailed patterns, extracting and translating these natural tones into unique dyeing schemes. Manual methods yield just four to five yards per day per machine, differentiating their approach. They source Egyptian cotton yarn via India, use only natural fibers, and plan to shift to natural dyes from local plants.

A water treatment system ensures environmental care. Equally inspiring is the quiet spirit of women’s empowerment that lies at the heart of this enterprise. Today, around 15 women work on site, while several others contribute from home.

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Pannala has long nurtured many skilled women who once lent their talents to the area's apparel factories. Yet, after marriage and motherhood, many of them step away from formal employment, their abilities gently receding into the background of domestic life. Following the example set by their mother, Lalantha sought to bring those dormant skills back into the light. He has provided handlooms to around ten women who now weave from the comfort of their homes.

In addition, the venture creates space for women to contribute accessories such as delicate crochet work and fine embroidery—crafts that might otherwise have remained quietly unused. This distributed model gathers the talents of women who might not otherwise engage in formal work.



Experiencing the journey behind every handwoven piece.



Asha guiding the process, passing craft through hands-on learning.

In doing so, it nurtures livelihoods and offers economic independence. The weavers and designers A closer look at the art of weaving. are friends and neighbors, working in a warm, supportive environment where stories, knowledge, and emotions are shared.



Nature printed gently onto fabric.



Chintha, at the heart of the craft.



A closer look at the art of weaving.

Through Lasalu, Lalantha, and his family quietly challenge fast fashion by embracing slow, mindful creation. Each weaver adds a personal touch, making every piece unique. This philosophy fosters therapeutic artistry—an experience they hope every visitor senses.



The journey begins in nature, leading to a space of craft and creation.

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