‘RAFT HOUSE’ Float away into tranquillity

Posted on

A light breeze running through your hair, nothing but cool, deep water, green shores and blue skies as far as the eye can see, everything around you calm and still as you watch yourself drift away from the bustling routines of life.

Words Dinali Sugathadasa Photographs Menaka Aravinda

Raft House; from afar, a that-ched roofed hut floating on the expanse of the Bolgoda Lake, from within a cosy little wooden cottage with legroom for a bedroom, dining area and kitchen, furnishes a spectacular 360-degree view of the beautiful Lake.

The founder of the stunning ‘Boulder Garden’ and ‘Rainforest Edge’ nature resorts, Sarathchandra Ramanayake’s newest venture together with his partner in the project Upul Suriyaarachchi, the Raft House is an inspiring idea. It is a 21st Century metamorphosis of the traditional Sri Lankan boathouse. “This is not a new concept, traditionally people had these kinds of houses in Sri Lanka, a lot of the transportation needs specially for wood and logs were served by the river those days, so they used to have houses and shops inside the boat,” says Ramanayake, giving a short account of where the inspiration for the venture came from.

On a ride aboard the Raft House while drifting along the Bolgoda Lake, the gentle lapping of waves around us, we learn about the Raft House’s eco tourism concept. “The boat has a very small engine, just about three horse power, it doesn’t make any waves at all”, explains Ramanayake, adding that the electricity supplied while the Raft House is in motion is through solar power and assures that proper storage and disposal of waste is practiced by its crew, who travels with the guests.

A myriad of fascinating activity surrounds us. We cruise along the lake manoeuvring through the prawn traps set up by villagers. Serving authentic Sri Lankan cuisine aboard, the Raft House especially caters prawns and fish angled straight out of the Lake and fresh vegetables obtained from the lakeside villages all prepared within the boat by a crew providing butler service, while the guest sits back and indulges

in the tastes, sights and nature.

Over the course of their stay, guests aboard the Raft House can expect to see many eagles fishing in the Lake during daytime. The boat travels up to Upper Bolgoda Lake, which is well known amongst nature lovers for its wildlife particularly bird watching and plant life, on the other hand there’s always fishing and rowing or kayaking as an option open to the livelier traveller.

The Raft House venture is expected to be opened up to the public within the month of August and even though only recently started and on a trial period as of yet, the response from the customers has already been very good. As we reach the shores of Moratuwa, from whence we began our short journey the Raft House experience is already etched in our memory; a pampering of your senses entwined with the still calmness, fresh air and natural beauty of the Bolgoda Lake rejuvenating a weary soul.

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