



Two women cautiously poured hot wax into moulds of shiny silver while another woman stirred thick black wax in a vessel. A man polished a beautiful lilac candle with a cloth and a pile of unpolished candles rested on a table beside him. On top of a pale green machine, black candles were raised. The air was infused with the scents of blueberry, cinnamon, wild fruit, clove and a fierce hint of boiling wax. I was inside the factory of the Royal Candle Works.

Words Chamindra Warusawithana Photographs Indika de Silva

The Royal Candle Works produces candles for export as well as sale within Sri Lanka. These candles light up chandeliers in the Buckingham Palace, perfume lavish garden parties, shed subtle rays of romance on candlelit dinners and repel insects with their citronella magic.

I started my tour of Royal Candle Works with a stop at the carefully arranged display candles, which hinted at the artistic touch that goes into the making of candles for their various purposes. The dinner candles come in either twin packs of lacquer dipped silver and gold or 12 packs in a burst of colours starting from French blue, evergreen, flame red, yellow to ivory. The dinner candles as well as the tall column candles are machine made. The symmetrical butted edges of the twelve inch candles are also shaped inside a characteristic candle making machine that methodically peels away the wax from candle edges. Small and large pillar candles of subtly varying shades are moulded with the

combined efforts of elbow grease and candle moulds along with the usual ingredients of wax, chemicals and plenty of heat.

A little further from this geometrically pleasing assemble of pillars and dinner candles, I spied a bundle of organza bags filled with purplish silver stars, yellow and white frangipani flowers and lotus flowers. These were floating candles, made to float on water and light up a pleasant evening with their subtle shades and play of light. The tea lights produced at Royal Candle Works illuminate many epicurean evenings at restaurants, hotels and homes around the globe.

[They were all effectively busy but at a slow rhythmic pace that rhymed with the art of candle making](#)

I spent quite sometime inspecting the ivory and pale yellow votives lying next to the filled glasses which offered a harmonious contrast with their brighter shades of lime green, orange, purple and rose.

Throughout my stay at Royal Candle Works, the sweet and tangy aroma of scented candles sent splashes of delight through my senses. Especially, the blueberry ice and cinnamon scented candles kept me lingering around a pile of candles. Not only the perfume but also the dusk rose, lilac and flaming red of the candles appealed to my senses. A home spa made of a curious assemble of terracotta pans and trays lit with a tea light lent its soothing aroma to this atmosphere. The bottom terracotta tray contained exotic herbs and flowers, while the tea light heated herbal oil in the top tray. The citronella scented candles in either large metal buckets or clay pots perform a less sensual but necessary task of chasing away the insects.

Curious to see the factory where all these exquisite candles come to life I wended my way towards the factory premises. It was a fairly quiet day at the factory. A cluster of tall black candles were already raised in a machine, while jet black liquid wax boiled in a vat. A few employees polished lilac candles to get the sparkling fine finishing touch, while two women were busy pouring the last layer of wax into tea lights. They were all effectively busy but at a slow rhythmic pace that rhymed with the art of candle making.

The Royal Candle Works is not only a place that produces candles; it is also a home to an organic garden of fruit and vegetables. On certain days, at the end of a busy day's work, employees at Royal Candle Works get to take a harvest of organic fruit and vegetables home.

Royal Candle Works

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