Royal Retreat: unwind amidst nature

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The exterior of the main restaurant area and the lobby, a bullock cart can be seen on the side

Hidden amidst the lush greenery of Kimbissa, Sigiriya is a quaint little hotel that is perfect for a peaceful getaway. Replete with all comforts needed, Royal Retreat treats guests to an indulgent vacation that is fit for royalty!

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Amere three minutes away from the world renowned Sigiriya Rock Fortress, Royal Retreat rests snuggled in its surrounding, exuding a welcoming ambience. Part of the Da Vinci Group and a brainchild of Leonard De Silva, Chairman and Managing Director of the group, Royal Retreat first opened its doors as a boutique hotel in September 2014. Being an avid nature lover, the hotel was built to be completely in harmony with its environment where countless trees and the chirping of birds lull the guests to a soothing holiday.

Walking in through the gates, a stoned pathway leads to the entrance of the hotel. As you step along your gaze would be drawn to the unique structure where touches

of the old and the new complement to provide a pleasing sight to the eye. While the lobby area is decked in white and modern elements, the areas leading to the restaurants are covered with thatched roofs and timber tones presenting a delightful contrast.

In the lobby while you are being greeted warmly by the staff, you cannot help but be entranced by the mural behind the reception. Hued in green and 22 karat gold, it is a depiction of the Sigiriya frescoes and acts as a reminder of the wonders created by our ancestors. Passing the lobby, you alight at an open area where chalets, yet again decked with thatched roofs, are situated in neat rows. Pathways lead to, and back from, the chalets and the main area and a swimming pool is located at one corner, where guests can take a refreshing dip to escape the tropical heat.

There are 18 chalets—16 superior and two deluxe chalets, which are interconnected to superior rooms and can be converted to family rooms if the need arises. All rooms are spacious and are arrayed with a myriad of amenities including mini bar facilities, a television that can be used as a computer and free WiFi to name a few. The deluxe chalet comes with a Jacuzzi to provide an extra level of comfort. Bright hues and mellow tones with rustic touches set the theme for the chalets where guests can indulge in traditional Sri Lankan hospitality.

Royal Retreat, equipped with two restaurants—a fine dining and live seafood restaurant—provides a range of cuisines for guests to taste. A rare treat for anyone visiting the area, the hotel specialises in a variety of seafood dishes and takes pride in offering the freshest fare possible. Fish, lobster, crab and calamari are brought every day from Valachchenei and are kept in custom made tanks where guests can select their preference and even watch the preparations. Apart from seafood, the hotel offers Western, Indian, Sri Lankan, Italian, French or German cuisine. Some of the produce are picked straight from the hotel’s own garden. The bar provides a range of cocktails and other beverages to enjoy.

Though the hotel does not cater to large functions, Royal Retreat hosts weddings, especially for non-Sri Lankans who prefer to experience the customs of a traditional Sri Lankan wedding. Able to accommodate up to 45-50 guests, the affair would be in a very intimate setting, and is a perfect option for couples who are looking for something different from the mundane.

For adventure lovers and history buffs, the hotel arranges a number of excursions, including trips to the nearby Sigiriya Rock Fortress, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and

the Minneriya National Park. For nature lovers, the hotel has its own Naturalist who will accompany guests on nature trails and bird watching expeditions while a bullock cart is available for those who would like to travel around in the old traditional way. Further, bicycles and tricycles can also be hired to tour the neighbourhood and to explore at leisure.

For those who want to experience nature up close and personal, Royal Retreat has a camping ground, outfitted with well appointed tents that comes with all modern facilities. Situated on a 250 acre plot of secluded forestland adjacent to the Sigiriya Rock Fortress, the camp site, includes its own restaurant, bonfire and barbecue facilities as well.

The staff at Royal Retreat are dedicated and ensures that guests are provided with the utmost comfort so that they will feel at home. If you are looking for a relaxing vacation along with an ample dose of culture and adventure, then make your way to Royal Retreat and be charmed by all that the hotel offers.

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