

Nalin Wijesekera



A liberal slice of the colourful vernacular of Sri Lanka was taken in hand by Le Galadari Meridien, given a brilliant sheen by Orientations and the total package flown out by Airlanka to Deuville in France for the prestigious 'Top Resa' Travel and Trade Fair. Styled 'Taste of Paradise', the pageant is a cultural salad of the island's traditional fashions -the village grassroots 'modes' adapted for the modern milieu; The presentation is to be at a cocktail party for 300 top European travel agents, to be held during 'Top Resa' and hosted by Airlanka, the Ceylon Tourist Board and Le Galadari Meridien. "The very indigenous nature of the pageant will give destination awareness of Sri Lanka and her marketable products, which is vital at the present juncture," explained Meridien's Director of Sales, Gnana Samarathunge.

The preview of the pageant that was tastefully dished out at the Meridien's plush Bougainvillaea Ballroom was a show that does Sri Lanka proud. Its mellifluous repertoire of the fascinating facets of Sri Lanka's ethnic and cultural mix had the stamp of professional sleekness, with the total sweep of the pageant being ably orchestrated by Senaka de Silva. Ribboning the production was an explanatory tape in French -that opened with 'Ayubowan' - a traditional temple dance, sublimely executed by Khema and other dancers in virgin white, depicting the purity and serenity of village life. 'Greenfields' echoed the traditional attire of a rustic island people -from paddy harvesters, tea pluckers and rubber tappers to coconut

pickers, whose dresses were adapted to meet the demands of urban fashion, in motley green variations of handwoven local fabrics. Sri Lanka's lush wild flora was given representation in 'Floralia' -where locally printed cotton fabrics went beautifully berserk in the multi-coloured flower motifs favoured by village belles, all adroitly translated into summer fashions. 'Seascape' was imbued with the brilliant hues of blue skies and the feel and tempo of turquoise waters. The batik beachwear was subtly influenced by the life and rhythms of Lanka's coastal fisherfolk, giving this section a lot of food for fashionable thought on lively beachwear designs, while its ambience was filled with a heady, toe-tapping tempo. 'Earthbound' dry, subdued earth tones from the island's Dry Zone, were matched with jungle and shrub, and of 'chena' cultivators, whose traditional dresses were given a high fashion twist in Sri Lankan natural silk. The curtain dropped serenely on 'Sunset' -a selection of exotic sarees in various silks, swathed into sundry ethnic drapes from the Muslim community to Tamil, Kandyan and low country traditions.

Colombo Meridien's efforts further consist of printing a special brochure to highlight the fashion show that is sponsored by Premadasa Jewellers Ltd., and sending one of our chefs to prepare meals at the cocktail party. 'Taste of Paradise' is not a mere fashion show, but a pageant that depicts Sri Lanka's many-faceted characters and images." Two male, four female models and a 'prima donna' set the catwalk ablaze with their classical movements, imaginative outfits, a strongly functional 'mise en scene' and a warm selection of traditional music that heightened the atmosphere, culminating in the catchy Airlanka theme jingle -'Sri Lanka Paradise'.

Slice of Sri Lanka at France's TopResa



Ayubowan (Aruna Kirthisinghe)

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