

The Barnhouse: Where Nature Meets Celebration

Posted on

The Barnhouse feels less like a venue and more like a mood. Everything about it is beautifully curated and presented with impeccable taste.

Words: Jennifer Paldano Goonewardane.



Where rustic timber meets the quiet poetry of nature at The Barn.

Entering through the wooden gates of The Barnhouse Studio, past rows of residences, one immediately senses a different landscape—a lush, fertile place where calmness prevails, even in the harsh sun and soaring heat. Surrounded by

vastness, thoughts arise. Its idyllic beauty—nestled in nature, a haven of stillness and retreat, sunlight filtering through leaves and rustic charm—remains unmistakable. This is the feeling Kushantha Hewapathirana wants every guest to experience. He wants visitors to leave behind urban sounds and feel they never want to leave—a sense of pleasure and paradise. He envisions the property as a place where humans sync with nature and mind with world—a time to reset, rejuvenate, and think afresh.



Kushantha Hewapathirana, Founder, The Barnhouse.

With thirty years as a professional photographer, Kushantha observed a gap in Sri Lanka's event venues—most felt restrictive, contained by four walls. Motivated by a desire to transform industry norms, he founded The Barnhouse Studio in 2018 to pioneer an entirely new event concept, envisioned to be open, connected to nature, and fundamentally different from conventional venues. His intent was to provide an inspiring, boundary-breaking environment for memorable celebrations.

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Beneath a shimmering canopy of lights, each moment becomes magical at Main Barn Hall.

The Barnhouse is stunningly and beautifully different, changing the familiar design language of venues and entertainment spaces. By diverging from the norm, Kushantha intends to create distinctive atmospheres—a minimalist site where each element is purposefully chosen to evoke awe and intentional simplicity.

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Eatery By The Barn (Restaurant).

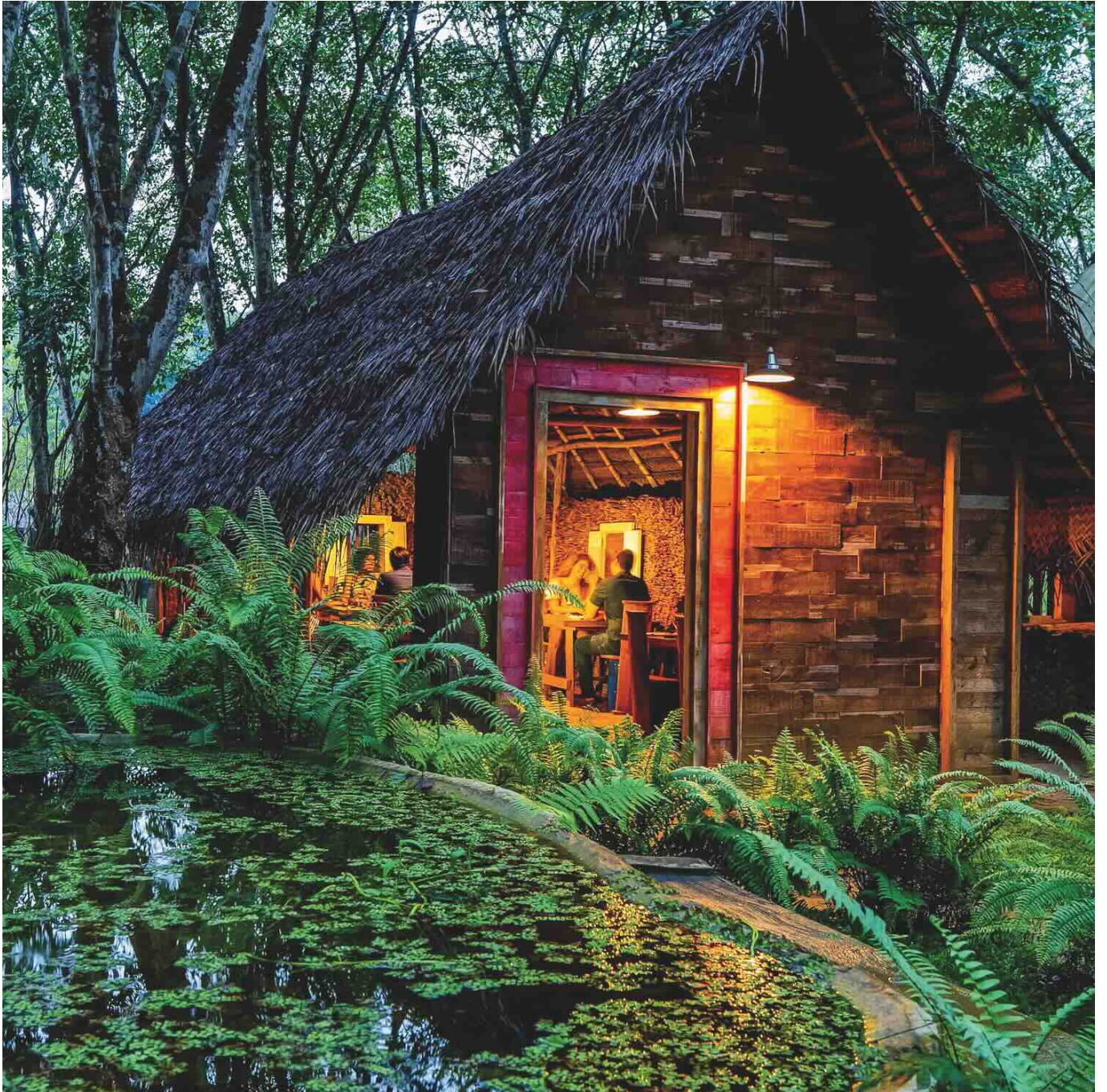
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Gather, dine, and linger a little longer, making moments unforgettable.

A barn, predominantly European in concept, represents ruggedness – plain, simple, inelegant, built for purpose. In these austere structures, Kushantha saw an opportunity, an idea to create something natural and close to nature. The Barnhouse is built on five acres of land that was once an active rubber plantation, with evidence still evident, large rubber trees shaping a landscape that boasts a thousand trees.

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An enchanting dinner at Eatery by the Barn.

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Nature, reflected in its purest form.

Situated approximately thirty kilometers from Colombo, in Panadura, in the southern district of Kalutara, The Barnhouse has elevated the concept of event venues by fusing the simplistic charm of rustic structures with nature's rawness. Rather than altering the natural landscape—with its slopes and uneven ground—the

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structures were integrated into their surroundings, with a stream running through the middle and natural formations enhancing its uniqueness. The property has five chalets and rooms, which management will not expand, so more space remains unbuilt.



Wooden chalets that blend seamlessly with nature, offering warmth, calm, and retreat.

Guests can enjoy special moments, whether in an intimate reception, nestled beneath the shade of a canopy of trees or simply surrounded by birds, butterflies, and nature. The Barnhouse offers a spellbinding setting, like something out of a picture book or a movie.

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Inside the chalet, every detail is simple, thoughtful, and deeply intentional.

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An intimate chalet immersed in quiet serenity.

Central to the concept is the Main Barn, atop a small hill, embodying the space's essence—barn-styled, unpretentious, and deeply rooted. True to the dream, all materials are upcycled waste; everything, from walls to furniture, is made from pallet wood. Timber use elevates the style and suits discerning clients. The cozy, warm interior offers intimacy for those celebrating their special day.



A carbon-neutral guitar festival, setting a new benchmark.

In 2018, Kushantha bought discarded pallets used as waste. Today, their value has soared thanks to his project, which showed their potential for construction and furnishings. Kushantha is proud that, after his concept, pallets became a sustainability trend. Using timber would have meant felling at least 700 trees. His victory lies in changing perceptions of beauty and material use, opening minds to this versatile material. To him, The Barnhouse is an inimitable 'masterpiece' pairing creativity with climate-friendly business trends.

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The Barnhouse stands out not just in concept but in practice, focusing on environmental stewardship. Management organizes low-carbon-emission and even zero-emission events. A MoU with Control Union ensures that carbon emissions are calculated and independently verified in accordance with ISO 14064, ISO 14067, and PAS 2060. The process reviews organizer-collected data on energy, travel, and waste to verify accurate GHG emissions calculations.

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A peaceful poolside setting for meaningful conversations.

The Barnhouse has already hosted its first carbon-neutral wedding and a corporate event for executives. It also includes the first carbon-neutral guitar festival for 400 attendees, now being studied by the University of Colombo. Once completed, the results will provide Sri Lanka with a blueprint for organizing a carbon-neutral music festival. The Main Barn hosts up to 350 for large gatherings. The Mini Barn, further down, holds around sixty guests for intimate celebrations and is ideal for corporate events.

The chalets and rooms continue the theme, made of wood like the rest of the property. Echoes of minimalism ring through the interiors; pictures from book covers of several Russian authors who used the pen for change—a line of thought resonating with The Barnhouse’s innovative approach—adorn the timber walls. Lampshades are mounted on old typewriters and sewing machine bodies. Everything remains sparse, simple, and artistic, yet it boasts comfort and modern facilities. Above all, they preserve the tranquility of the property.



Sherwood by The Barn—Sri Lanka’s first sustainable, climate-friendly venue.

Wooden huts with thatched roofs serve as lounging areas, including a restaurant open from 11 to 11 and a swimming pool. The management sources supplies, laundry, and employment within nearby villages to reduce energy costs and support local livelihoods, keeping operations within a defined radius. Adhering to sustainability commitments—the core philosophy—management innovates in response to external changes. The energy crisis highlighted the need for less energy-intensive options.

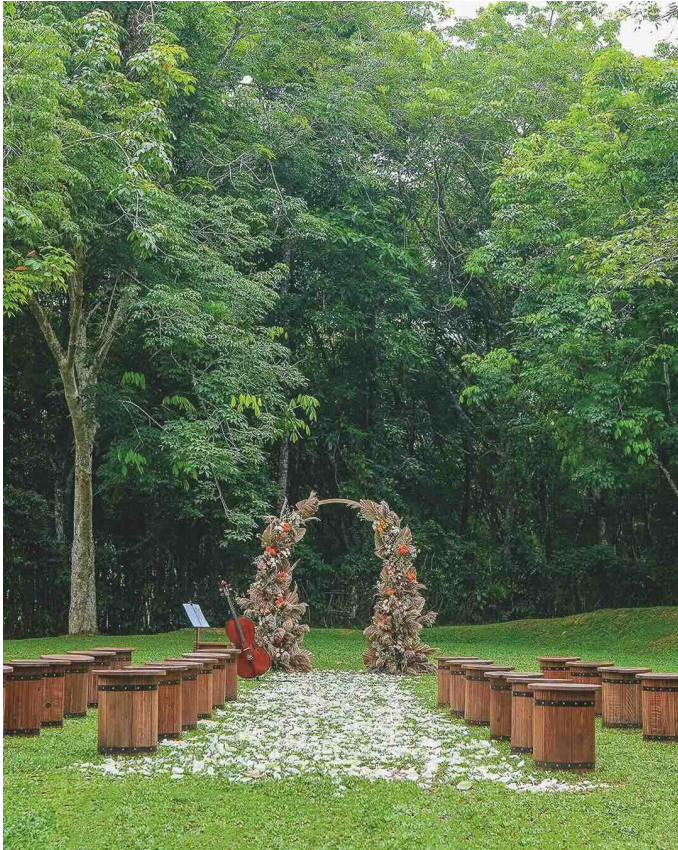
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Sherwood by The Barn, described as Sri Lanka’s first sustainable, climate-friendly venue, bears Herne the Hunter as its insignia. Kushantha sees Herne as a game-changer in Robin Hood mythology, evolving the story into legend. Sherwood by the Barn is open, overlooking the garden. To enhance guest comfort, Kushantha introduced a tree-mounted mist-cooling system that releases ultra-fine mist to lower the area’s temperature. This addition, according to Kushantha, is a game-changer in their quest to operate a venue that actively pursues environmentally-friendly

practices.

At night, the venue becomes a vibrant oasis, while by day it radiates warmth. The gardens extend this ambiance with the Barn Lawn, where curated weddings unfold under emerald canopies and whispering trees, creating an ethereal, stunning setting.

Adding to the offerings is Whisper of Ceylon—a curated, theatrical ceremony inspired by the island's Veddha traditions. Members of this ancient community conduct rituals, from attire to food. Michael Wijesuriya designs the attire, strengthening links to the past. Veddha men bring ritual items for the ceremony, performing practices meticulously to guests' wonderment. The groom tries the bow and arrow, and the couple lights a candle made from beehive wax with stones instead of a match. Set amid trees standing as quiet guardians, the experience feels surreal. Kurakkan flour and bee honey, brought by the indigenous men, are used to prepare roti, which are served with honey. This offering is more than just a package showcasing an exotic ritual - it revives and preserves the island's ancient traditions before they fade. It represents the management's CSR initiative toward this diminishing indigenous community.



An open-air setting crafted for timeless celebrations.

The Barnhouse will soon conceptualize weddings to suit the seasons – creating moods for spring, summer, and autumn. Décor, music, and food will coalesce with the scents and essence of each season. In doing so, Kushantha and his team aim to break away from the artificiality of weddings, allowing everyone to truly feel the joy of the occasion. The Barnhouse Studio is open to all – from children to adults, for weddings, parties, corporate events, or leisure activities such as pottery, mask painting, cake baking, learning rubber tapping, tree-face sculpting, or celebrating Avurudhu. With ample space, every guest can choose their favorite spot to lounge, learn, or enjoy sumptuous food.

Barnhouse

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