

## **Bentota Beach – The Cinnamon Luxury Collection Celebrates Literature with Gratiaen**

*14<sup>th</sup> Sep 2020*; Launching another event in its fêted series of curated signature experiences, Bentota Beach – The Cinnamon Luxury Collection, in partnership with The Gratiaen Trust, will present ‘A Weekend with Gratiaen Winners’ on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2020.

This unique intimate literary experience will feature some of Sri Lanka’s prominent literary figures, in the backdrop of the beautiful Bentota Beach, the legendary property that embodies art, design and luxury.

The award-winning authors at the event will include Andrew Fidel Fernando, Arun Welendawe-Prematilleke, Shehan Karunatilaka, Vivimarie Van Der Poorten, Lal Medawattegedera, Delon Weerasinghe, and Prashani Rambukwella.

Recognised as the most coveted literary prize for Sri Lankan English writers, The Gratiaen Prize has an unbroken two-and-a-half-decade long tradition of recognising and rewarding some of the island’s best creative talent, since its inception in 1993 by Founder Michael Ondaatje.

“When we launched Bentota Beach as the flagship property of the new ‘The Cinnamon Luxury Collection’, we unveiled with it a new genre of excitement. We introduced a series of signature experiences, carefully curated to cater to the vibrant tastes of today’s discerning traveller,” explains Dileep Mudadeniya, Vice President – John Keells Group.

“These experiential events, held on a regular basis, will be showstoppers in their own rights, be it literary, gastronomic, sports-related, musical, or artistic,” he said, adding that every event will be crafted to align with the sophisticated luxury and refined experience that Bentota Beach – The Cinnamon Luxury Collection, offers.

The event will unfold with poetry readings from Gratiaen Prize winning poets Vivimarie Van Der Poorten, Vihanga Perera, Jean Arasanayagam, and Thiagaraja Arasanayagam, at a Bawa garden. Guests will be transported to a world of poetic enthrallment, enveloped by the graceful wilderness of the enchanting gardens by one of Sri Lanka’s most notable landscape architects.

The rest of the weekend’s activities will take place at Bentota Beach – The Cinnamon Luxury Collection. This will include *A Traveler’s Tale* with Andrew Fidel Fernando – a visually rich presentation of Andrew’s travels around the island, with a short reading from his Gratiaen Award winning book, *Upon a Sleepless Isle*.

A key highlight will be the panel discussion with Andrew Fidel Fernando, Shehan Karunatilake, Vivimarie Van Der Poorten and Lal Medawattegedera. Moderated by Harshana Rambukwella, the conversation will revolve around creative writing on sport, politics, travel, and contemporary Sri Lanka.

Guests will also have the opportunity to enjoy 45-minutes of theatre with Arun Welendawe-Prematilleke, when his short play *Tea/Coffee* is performed, and extracts from *The One Who Loves You So* are read. In addition, guests will be able to participate in a conversation with

Prashani Rambukwella and Vivimarie Van Der Poorten on their experiences of being women writers.

The literary weekend will also be one of gastronomic exploration and fun-filled encounters. Guests will be hosted to the Hotel's most significant buffet spreads, high tea and evening cocktails with jazz and fellowship.

Make a date with poetry, fiction and drama, and explore the wonders of the literary world with some of Sri Lanka's most celebrated authors at Bentota Beach – The Cinnamon Luxury Collection.

'A Weekend with Gratiaen Winners' is available as an overnight package for 40 guests on room-sharing basis, and also as a day package for 20 guests. Contact the Hotel on +94 34 227 5176 for reservations, which will be made on a first-come-first-served basis.

**For any added information, please contact**

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