

Press Release

16th January 2020

Cinnamon Bentota Beach opens doors to its first guests!

Thursday, 16th January 2020, Colombo; Cinnamon Bentota Beach officially opened doors to its first guests on 15th January as the flagship property of Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts.

To mark the occasion, religious observances of all faiths were conducted with the participation of Chairman John Keells Holdings Krishan Balendra, Deputy Chairman Gehan Coorey, and Vice Presidents John Keells Holdings and President Leisure Sector Jit Gunaratne among other special invitees, staff and guests. The ceremony took place against the backdrop of the famous Peacock sculpture by Laki Senanayake that originally stood there since hotel's inception.

The Bentota Beach Hotel was first built in 1967 as tourism development project encouraged by the government of Sri Lanka, and was originally designed by renowned architect, Geoffrey Bawa. Exactly 50 years after, the acclaimed resort hotel was closed for refurbishment under the vision and guidance of Channa Daswatte. Following an investment of Rs. 4.8 billion the resort is now open to a new generation of guests as a unique experience of traditional and modern Sri Lanka through the art and architecture distinctive to the island and its rich history.

Commenting on the opening of the much awaited resort, Vice Presidents John Keells Holdings and President Leisure Sector Jit Gunaratne stated, "Cinnamon Bentota Beach holds varied indigenous features that highlight the resort as unique among hospitality offerings in Asia, back then and even now. Through the design of this property, Bawa has managed to create an experience that is rooted in place and time. Hence, we made dedicated decision to restore the resort for its importance in the architectural history in the world as it is an important component of modern society in a day and age where not many significant buildings are conserved."

The monumental refurbishment of the resort included key components such as reinstating the famous ceiling by Ena de Silva at the entrance, made of handloom fabric designed by Barbara Sansoni and Barefoot, recreating the ceiling of the Peacock Salon and bar formerly covered in handloom with aid of designer, Marie Gnanaraj and restoring the gilded and painted panel by Ismeth Raheem on the south wall of the Peacock that records memories of the Bentota Beach Hotel and its 50 year history.

Simultaneously, the brass panels on the copper backdrop of the lift doors designed by the architect Anura Ratnavibhushana were brought back to its former condition, painted wall panels of the Peacock Salon were copied from the records kept by Ismeth Raheem to bring to its original form while the ceiling and wall panels of the check-out lounge emulated the original design used by Bawa when it previously functioned as an all-day dining space.

Additionally, 16 suites were conceptualized containing artifacts and art corresponding to the name of each suite, with inclusion of main piece of artwork on the wall of the living rooms and several others in the bathrooms and dressing areas. Six archival Barefoot fabric designs by Barbara Sansoni displayed behind the bed heads while the cushions were specially designed and woven by Asanga Godamune.

The luxury resort comprise of many premium offerings such as tailor-made private dining experiences, introduction to authentic Sri Lankan cuisine and local specialities ranging from water sports and curated excursions to traditional Sri Lankan activities, special guest services include personal life-stylist for the suites, soap butler services, pillow menu, babysitting services, an excursions counter for curated tours and a Kids Club as well as the in-house Spa Ceylon with the finest oils, creams and scrubs used by the most skilled experts.

Transformed across a span of 309,000 square feet of its 11 acres of land, it offers 159 artistically ornate rooms that have meticulously blended traditional design elements and six distinctive restaurants presenting an array of fresh and novel culinary offerings to its guests.

Along with the In-house artisan village with Pottery Mask carving, Puppet making, Coconut leaf art, Drumming and Beralu lessons and the Bawa Museum was opened paying homage to the architect with some of the most unique and original pieces created during his tenure, its considered a personalized holistic experience of an iconic location amidst nature, culture and luxury. With the impression of capturing sense of place, the newly refurbished Cinnamon Bentota Beach stands on one of the most iconic locations in Bentota.

Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts comprises 14 distinct properties located in key areas across Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The Cinnamon brand focuses on delivering memorable holidays with the warmth and vibrancy of authentic hospitality.

**For further details on Cinnamon Bentota Beach
visit www.cinnamonhotels.com/cinnamonbentotabeach**