

Review: Cape Weligama, Sri Lanka

Pulse-slowing luxury comes tinged with adventure at this vertiginous resort



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It's hard to think of any more breath-taking viewpoint from which to enjoy a private dining experience than those carefully selected for guests' pleasure by the owners of Cape Weligama: a 39-key [resort](#) at which cliff-top diners might spot the odd whale or two, owned by the family behind Dilmah Tea and Ceylon Tea Trails and Wild Coast Tented Lodge (which opened in November 2017).

Perched 30 minutes' drive south of the Dutch colonial town of Galle Fort on [Sri Lanka's](#) south coast, Cape Weligama's 270-degree panoramas of the Indian Ocean are truly beguiling, and can also be enjoyed from the 39 villas which have been built around the [resort's](#) 12 acres of lush tropical gardens with privacy a major priority. Thai architect Lek Bunnag – whose CV features names including The Four Seasons Langkawi, Maia Seychelles, Pangkor Laut and Ritz Carlton Phulay Bay – has masterminded the buildings, while the interiors, the work of JPA Design's Singapore studio, draw on the island's maritime heritage, fauna and a product that is, to [Sri Lanka](#), what real ale is to England: Ceylon tea. All are butler-attended, and have a petal-scented "watta", or walled garden, not to mention a steam room with stone benches and – in case the spa feels like a bit of a trek when you're this relaxed – a massage bed.



In the public spaces, meanwhile, adherence to locale also reigns supreme: restaurants, pools and bars feel authentically like a southern Sri Lankan village, their terra-cotta tile roofs making for a pleasing harmony with the green-and-ultramarine natural surrounds.

As well as scanning the sea-scape for extraordinary marine life that resides off of a coast that's as historically rich as it is biologically – trade winds carried the likes of Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta and Fa-Hsien past these palm-fringed shores – reef and wreck diving and big-game fishing are popular, while back on land, elegant dilapidated forts, cobbled mini-metropolises, villages, lakes, paddy fields and national parks (think wild monkeys and peacocks) are all easily accessible with the help of a resort guide and his private vehicle.



Others will be tempted to while away their time in either the vast, crescent-shaped moon infinity pool (at the end of which a 100-foot cliff-drop provides a little drama to spice up all the pulse-slowing serenity) or a spa which offers scented steam showers, organic spice scrubs and cinnamon-laced essential-oil massages.

When it comes to dining, meanwhile, guests can choose between having the day's freshest catches cooked-to-order (try the Jack fish grilled with lime, olive oil and pepper or a Sri Lankan curry sauce – or both, separately) at the cliff-edge Ocean Terrace or Tableau – intimate chef's table experiences. Sri Lankan treats such as lavishly spiced dosa and hoppers are among breakfast options, as are Western options: the usual suspects, plus child-friendly offerings such as pancakes with cream and chocolate.



Don't forget to pack a hearty appetite along with your binoculars, when heading for this jewel in an emerging but as-yet unspoilt tourism destination.

An Ocean Pool Villa at Cape Weligama starts from US\$935 (around £715) per night with breakfast, based on double occupancy. ([+94.11.774.5700](tel:+94117745700), www.capeweligama.com)

