THE PARADISE OF SRI LANKA
WITH MICHAEL BATES

18 FEBRUARY - 5 MARCH 2016

Discover a paradise island with incredible flavours, history and culture. Sri Lanka offers World Heritage sites, bustling cities, highlands, tea plantations, serene gardens and baby elephants! History of the island dates back 2000 years and thanks to its colonial past, it’s a rich cultural mix of festivities, tradition and exotic cuisine. Prepare to be dazzled by this secret tropical island.

ROSS garden tours
ITINERARY

HIGHLIGHTS
+ Visit World Heritage listed sites - ancient Buddhist temples, cave paintings and historic hill towns
+ All aboard the scenic train as we ride into the tea plantations
+ Visit two of the best gardens - Geoffrey Bawa’s Lunugung Estate and Bevis Bawa’s Brief Garden
+ Exclusive cooking demonstrations, exploring delicious flavours
+ Stay in the Geoffrey Bawa designed Lighthouse hotel in Galle
+ Marvel at noon gates, riské sculpture and artistic mosaics
+ Foodie’s delight with Sri Lankan curry & rice at Lunuganga
+ Get up close to the elephants at Pinnawal

DAY 1  THU 18 FEB
SYDNEY TO NEGOMBO
Meet your tour leaders Michael Bates and Paul Van Reyk at Sydney International Airport. Arrive late to Colombo. Transfer to your hotel in the resort town of Negombo, rich in culture and history.
Accommodation: Jetwing Blue, Negombo

DAY 2  FRI 19 FEB
NEGOMBO TO KANDALAMA (B/D)
Join Paul and Michael for breakfast and then set out for Dambulla within the cultural triangle in the centre of the island. Dating back to the 1st century BC, the Golden Temple of Dambulla has been the centre of pilgrimage for Buddhists and Hindus for 22 centuries! The cave monastery, home to Buddhist monks, is covered with exquisite 2,000 year old murals depicting life and times of Buddha. The shrines also house a collection of 157 statues in various sizes including a reclining Buddha 15m long. Vividly coloured frescos are the largest antique painted surface in the world. Finish our day with a beautiful view of the surrounding countryside.
Check into the Heritance, a hotel surrounded by pristine tropical jungle, designed by Geoffrey Bawa and overlooking the magnificent expanse of the Kandalama wewa (part of Sri Lanka’s famous ancient irrigation system) and across to the Sigiriya rock fortress in the distance. The hotel is one kilometre long and the hotels seven floors are unobtrusively set into the mountainside. Hotel boasts 3 swimming pools for relaxing. Welcome dinner tonight.
Accommodation: Heritance, Kandalama

DAY 3  SAT 20 FEB
ANURADHAPURA (B)
Visit the ancient city of Anuradhapura to visit its greatest treasures - dagobas - hemispherical shaped white domes. We’ll swing past the 2250 year old sacred Buddha’s tree of enlightenment – the Bo tree is said to be the oldest tree in the world and protected by UNESCO. Onward to Minintale for a beautiful mountain walk under frangipani trees to discover Buddhist caves.
Accommodation: Heritance, Kandalama

DAY 4  SUN 21 FEB
SIGIRIYA (B/L)
Explore Sigiriya or Lion Rock, a must-see natural wonder of Sri Lanka. Built by an obsessed monarch in the 5th century and an astonishing feat of engineering and construction. Sirigiya rises 200m of sheer core of rock above a forested plain. Discover a series of ancient gardens, moats, ramparts, pools, fountains arranged symmetrically on either side on the rock. Spot the remains or a pair of giant lions paws still guarding the staircase that leads to the summit, once occupied by a royal palace.
Enjoy an lunch cooking demonstration with Paul and the hotel chef.
Accommodation: Heritance, Kandalama

DAY 5  MON 22 FEB
KANDALAMA TO KANDY (B, L)
Travel to Kandy stopping en route to visit a coconut rope maker and lunch in a spice garden where you can explore the history, tastes and ayurvedic health uses of spices for which Sri Lanka is renowned. Arrive in

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TOUR LEADER
PAUL VAN REYK
Sri Lankan born, Paul is passionate about food. He shares his passion through cooking classes, websites and travel. Paul has a Masters in Gastronomy from Adelaide University and Cordon Bleu and is a reviewer for the Good Food Guide and Sydney Eats. He was also featured in the SBS Food Lover’s Guide to Sri Lanka.

TOUR LEADER
MICHAEL BATES
Michael runs one of Sydney's best landscaping companies and is mad keen on the Sri Lankan gardens and artistic genius of Geoffrey Bawa. Travelling frequently on study tours around the world, he is a passionate garden expert with a great sense of fun.
Kandy in the afternoon, a town that nestsles in the hills at an altitude of 488m and the last capital of the Sri Lankan kings. The name Kandy conjures visions of past, splendour, legend, folklore, mystery and traditions kept alive lovingly for years.

Check in to the breathtaking retreat of Amaya Hills in the verdant mountains of Hanthana, 9km from Kandy, where the architecture is Kandyian palatial style and the 170ft swimming pool is more than tempting!

Accommodation: Amaya Hills, Kandy

DAY 6  TUE 23 FEB
KANDY  (B)

This morning visit the Royal Botanical Gardens in Peradeniya, which was originally the pleasure garden of royalty. Nearly 4000 species of plants are found in the garden which is encircled by the Mahaweli River. Bandara Palipana, Professor of Botany who has worked in the garden for 25 years, will take us for a walk around the gardens that are famous for their collection of orchids. Afternoon tour of Kandy with its lakeside setting and a visit to the sacred Temple of the Tooth, which houses one of Buddhism’s most sacred relics and attracts followers of the faith from all over the world. The Royal Complex situated around the Temple of the Tooth and Kandy Lake comprises the Kings Palace, Queens Palace, Audience Hall, Boathouse and Royal Summer house, represent a zenith of ancient Sri Lankan architecture.

Accommodation: Amaya Hills, Kandy

DAY 7  WED 24 FEB
PINNAWALA ELEPHANT SANCTUARY (B/D)

A special visit to an elephant orphanage today with 75 elephants ranging from newborn to elderly matriarchs, some orphaned, some injured in the wild and others abandoned. We'll watch them eat, play and bathe in the river.

Back to Kandy for a home visit with a difference, a midula is an open planned house with space for drying the harvest and relaxation.

Dinner tonight at Helga’s Folly.

Accommodation: Amaya Hills, Kandy

DAY 8  THU 25 FEB
KANDY TO NUWARA ELIYA (B/HT)

Board the train at Peradeniya for one of the most scenic train trips in the world through stunning hills and tea plantations. We’ll get picked up at Nanu Oya station and drive to Nuwara Eliya to spend a relaxing afternoon in the hills and a special high tea at the Hill Club (dress code applies), which was founded in 1876 by a British coffee planter, as a home away from home, and today is a private club and hotel.

Check into the old world charm of Jetwing St Andrews, a former country house, reminiscent of the days of the British Raj – it’s all about English breakfasts, high tea and stiff brandy.

Accommodation: Jetwing St. Andrews

DAY 9  FRI 26 FEB
NUWARA ELIYA (B)

Tour Nuwara Eliya and understand how abundant rainfall, sunshine and cold nights makes the perfect cup of tea. Sri Lanka is one of the world’s largest exporters of tea. Since the introduction of tea in the mid-19th century, Nuwara Eliya has been the capital of the tea industry where rolling mountains in the highlands are carpeted by green tea plantations. Tea plantations abound as we get a little taste of England in the hills with rose gardens and dotted with stone houses. We’ll wander around the Hakgala Botanic Garden and visit a Tea Plantation with tea tasting this afternoon.

Accommodation: Jetwing St. Andrews

DAY 10  SAT 27 FEB
NUWARA ELIYA TO GALLE (B)

After breakfast we travel to Galle, an ancient Dutch outpost located on the southern west coast of Sri Lanka. Pass by the landscape that was filmed for ‘The Bridge over the River Kwai’ on the Kelani River near Kitulgala which is famous for white water rafting. The minimalistic, stately and elegant Lighthouse Hotel is our home for the next four nights, another hotel designed by Geoffrey Bawa who was responsible for linking the islands ancient architecture with modern modernism. Hotel terraces sweep down to a small sandy bay and unrestrained views of the Indian Ocean. Hotel is famous for local seafood, Japanese delicacies and the very best of Sri Lankan cuisine.

Accommodation: Jetwing Lighthouse, Galle

DAY 11  SUN 28 FEB
GALLE (B/L)

We discover Galle Fort’s low lined streets and rampart. The fort is a hive of activity and is one of the few World heritage listed sites which thrive with a bustling population, restaurants, shops and galleries, making this a pleasant and leisurely day.

Today Chef Nimal and Paul will put on a luncheon cooking class to demonstrate the local lamprais – a great treat. Remainder of the day at leisure.

Accommodation: Jetwing Lighthouse, Galle

DAY 12  MON 29 FEB
GALLE TO LUNUGANGA (B,L)

Visit the Lunuganga estate, the former country home of Geoffrey Bawa. Started in 1947, the garden led Bawa, originally a lawyer to the bar, to decide to become an architect. The garden in the estate here remained his muse and an experimental laboratory for new and exciting ideas. Explore the garden with Michael leading the charge.

Lunch to be taken within the gardens.

Accommodation: Jetwing Lighthouse, Galle

DAY 13  TUE 1 MAR
GALLE TO BENTOTA (B/L)

Coastal drive this morning, passing coastal villages to Bentota, where our destination is Bevis Bawa’s Brief garden. The estate is located along the south coast in Bentota. Bevis, Geoffrey’s brother, also an architect and artist, designed and converted what was a rubber plantation, bequeathed to him by his mother in 1929, into the legendary garden it is today. It’s a magical world surrounded by a thick bamboo hedge. The garden is a private wonderland filled with nooks, alcoves and cloisters, and the house quite invisible with a roof completely concealed in white bougainvillea. Beautifully filled with sculptures by Bevis himself and his many artist friends, including Donald Friend, who went for a weekend and stayed for six years. The house also contains many artworks including a magnificent mural of Sri Lankan life by Donald Friend in the style of Chagall. Lunch will be served at the third of our Bawa hotel visits– the Bentota Beach Hotel.

Accommodation: Jetwing Lighthouse, Galle

DAY 14  WED 2 MAR
GALLE TO COLOMBO (B)

After a leisurely morning at the hotel we drive to Colombo. This modern city still retains its old world charm in places. We check
into the iconic-historic-colonial Galle Face Hotel located within the heart of Colombo, situated along the seafront facing the famous Galle Face Green. Built in 1864 the hotel reflect the grandeur of the British Colonial period and is one of the oldest hotels east of the Suez, renowned for warm Sri Lankan hospitality.

Accommodation: Galle Face Hotel, Colombo

DAY 15  THU 3 MAR
COLOMBO (B/D)
Explore the commercial and historic hub of Colombo. The city tour will take in the sights – old city fort, Viharamahadevi Park, Hindu temple at Sea street, Dutch church at Wolfendal and the historical Davatagaha mosque. Drive past the Hulftsdorp Law Courts and Independence Square and Pettah, a noisy oriental bazaar with a mix of chaotic bargain shopping. Afternoon free for shopping for precious gems, clothing and antiques.

Enjoy a farewell dinner at Gallery café situated within the former office of Geoffrey Bawa.
Accommodation: Galle Face Hotel, Colombo

DAY 16  FRI 4 MAR
COLOMBO TO HOME (B)
Day at leisure. We have arranged a late checkout. Evening transfer to the airport.

DAY 17  SAT 5 MAR
HOME
Evening arrival into Australia.

SRI LANKAN CUISINE
Sri Lankan cuisine is one of the most complex cuisines of Asia. Due to its proximity to South India, the cuisine of Sri Lanka shows some influence, yet is in many ways quite distinct. As a major trade hub, it draws influence from colonial powers that were involved in Sri Lanka and by foreign traders. Rice, which is consumed daily, can be found at any occasion, while spicy curries are favourite dishes for lunch and dinner. Some of the Sri Lankan dishes have striking resemblance India’s Kerala cuisine, which could be due to the similar geographic and agricultural features.

SRI LANKAN GARDENS
The two great gardens of the coast north of Galle are both Bawa-gardens. Brief Garden, seven kilometres inland from Aluthgama, belonged to Bawa’s elder brother Bevis, who put more energy into the embellishment of this sylvan refuge than he did into his largely ceremonial role as the aide-de-camp to a succession of British governors of Ceylon. There are green rooms perfumed with flowers of cannonball trees and frangipani. A blurring of inside and outside spaces inspired Bawa and was a feature in many of the houses he went on to design. His own garden at Lunuganga Estate on the shores of the Bentota River, exposes the landscape in a series of dramatic vistas. If Brief is Italianate in its compartments and balustraded staircases, Lunuganga takes the wild and airy English Romantic tradition and gives it a Sri Lankan twist, with rubber, rice and cinnamon woven into the mix. The couple who now manage the place, Michael Daniels and Asha De Silva, are both architects and passionate about Bawa’s legacy.

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+ OUR TOUR INCLUDES
° Escorted by Paul Van Reyk and Michael Bates
° Air-conditioned motorcoach throughout
° Deluxe accommodation for 15 nights
° Breakfast daily, 5 lunches, 3 dinners, 1 High Tea, 1 spice tasting
° Entrance fees to all gardens and sightseeing and tastings as outlined in the itinerary
° Guided tours of Colombo, Golle, Kandy
° Transfers on arrival and departure if travelling on group flights
° Late checkout (6pm) Friday 4th March
° Cooking demonstrations with Paul Van Reyk throughout
° Gratuities for local guides and drivers
° Hotel porterage (one piece per person)

+ OUR TOUR COSTS
° Twin Share per person, land only $6,995
° Single Supplement $1,895
Please contact our office for flight details.

+ FITNESS LEVEL
° This tour requires a moderate level of fitness

+ VISA
° Australian and New Zealand citizens require a visa for Sri Lanka. Ross Tours will take care of this prior to your departure from Australia. Cost for visa is included in the tour price.

+ DISCOUNTS
° Early Bird $300 (Pay in full by 16 OCT 2015)
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° Garden Clinic Member $50
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° Prices based on minimum 15 passengers
° Price is based on departure from Sydney
° Please refer to Ross Garden Tours standard terms & conditions

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