

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a vibrant red sleeveless dress, a diamond necklace, and earrings, stands with her hand on her hip. Next to her, a man with short dark hair, wearing a black tuxedo jacket over a black shirt, sits and smiles. They are positioned in front of a dark, textured wall.

pulse

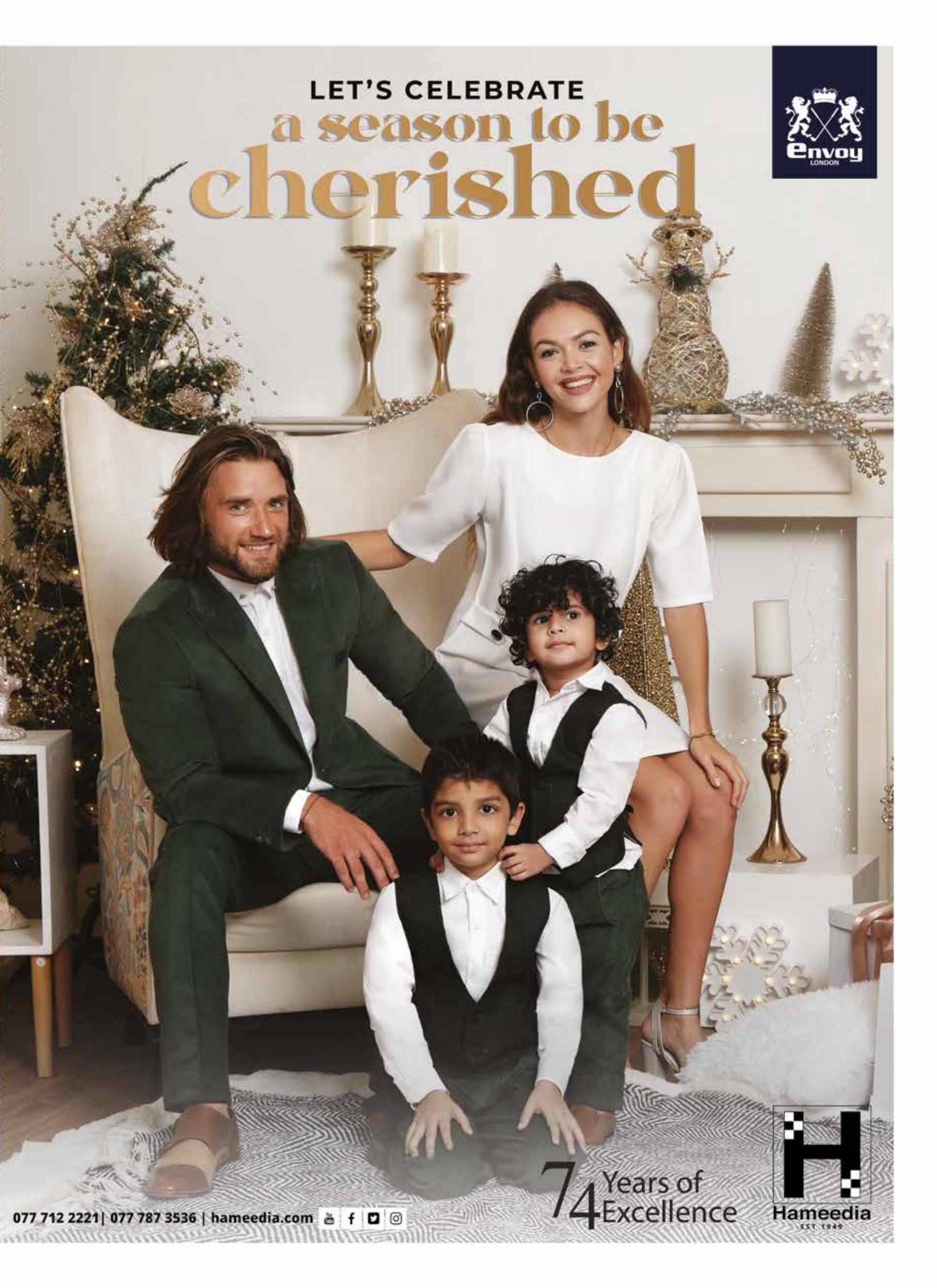
#LivingIt

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Ayesh and Thiyasha



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#LivingIt

Here we are, at the end of another roller coaster ride of an year - and we certainly haven't let the downs dampen our Christmas spirit and aspirations for chiselling a better 2023!

This December issue celebrates many a Sri Lankan who have been beacons of resilience; inspirational artists of myriad forms from photographers and writers to tattoo artists; must-try Christmas recipes and cocktails, and a host of events that rendered the year-end more colourful and exciting.

Gracing our cover this festive season are the dynamic sibling duo Thiyasha & Ayesha De Fonseka who sat down with Pulse for an intimate conversation taking us through their journey from childhood and education to finding their life partners and building a family to becoming the face of the unparalleled gem and jewellery brand 'Tiesh'.

What's more, we had the absolute pleasure of sitting down with Author Shehan Karunatilaka who spoke to us about winning The Booker Prize for 'The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida' and the long road leading up to that moment.

Sharing her personal experiences and insights, professional dancer and choreographer Sandarangi Perera conversed with us about how she first started, what her creative process is, the most challenging thing about what she does and more.

Adding to the vibrance of this issue is also the story of a shy boy who had a relentless passion for drawing who went on to become one of the most sought after tattoo artists of Sri Lanka; Dimmu Fernando.

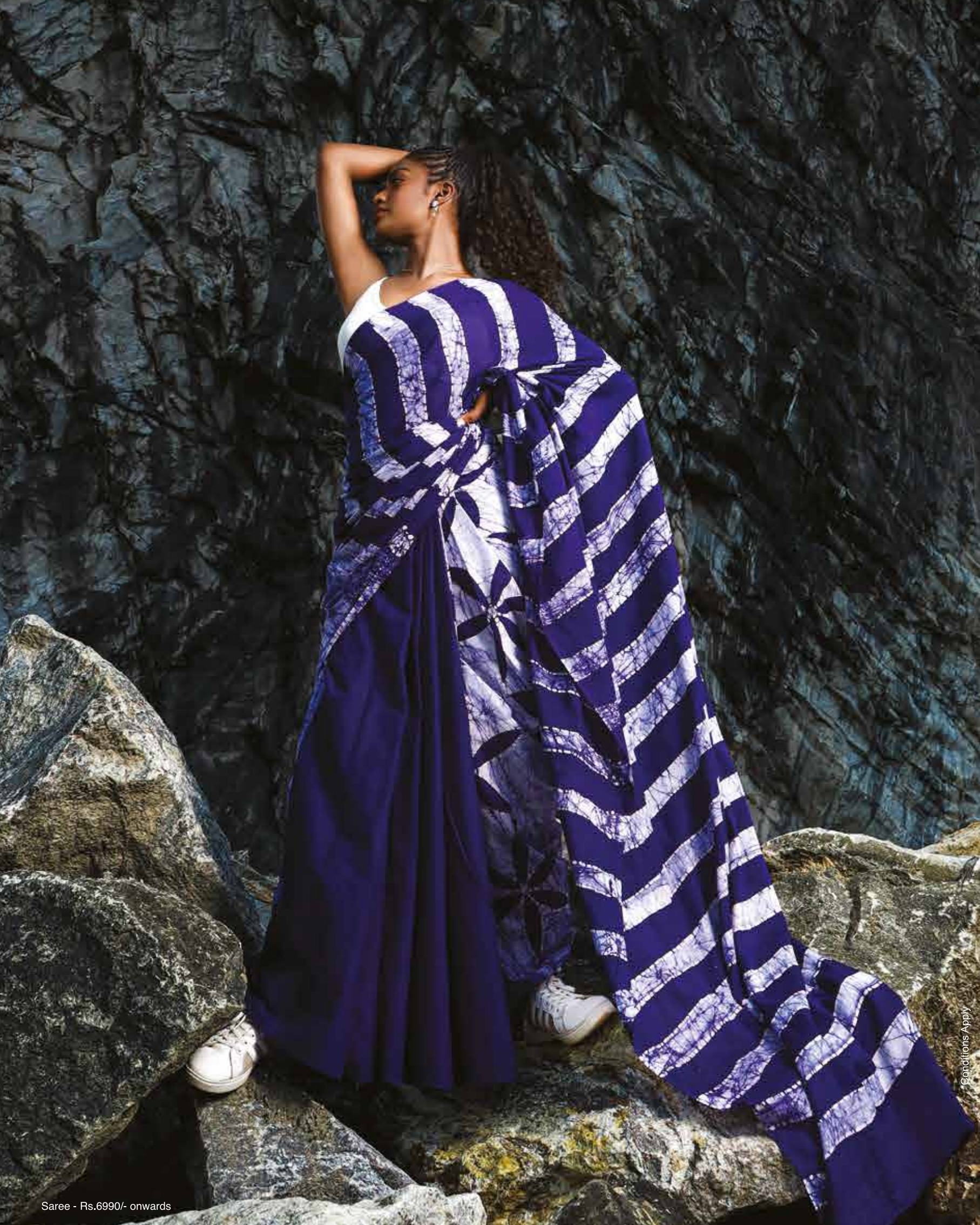
When you think of epic proposals in Sri Lanka, who comes to your mind? For us, it's none other than Janik Jayasuriya and Aseka Wijewardena, who really seem like they've stepped out of a fairytale. You can delve into their love story in this edition of the Friendship Meter.

You might be curious as you make those New Year's resolutions, can you really excel in more than one field, especially if they are so diverse? This time, our TikTok Trending segment brings you Senuri Rupasinghe, who is a Model, a Lawyer and a Content Creator.

These pages also bring you some delicious recipes by Auntie D and fascinating cocktails by Valerie that you simply don't want to miss this Christmas season. If you're heading out during this season, whether it be to catch up with an old friend over a casual meal with excellent coffee, or for a fine dining experience with that special someone, we've included some of the best dining spots that you can explore!

That's not all, flip through these pages and find out how Colombo has come alive this Christmas and what dazzlingly exciting events that took place around Colombo, ushering in the festive cheer. It's all waiting in these pages to be uncovered by you!

We've all weathered another difficult year, and amid adversity, we've become stronger, more resilient and determined - and we are moving onward and upward! As we bid farewell to another year of lessons and celebrations, we would like to thank our readers for their constant support and meaningful feedback. Here's wishing you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and an exceptional 2023!



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Personality



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Noeline Pereira

It's About Drive, Passion,
Dedication and Nails

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Calling This
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With Janik And Aseka

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**Cocktails
With Valarie**

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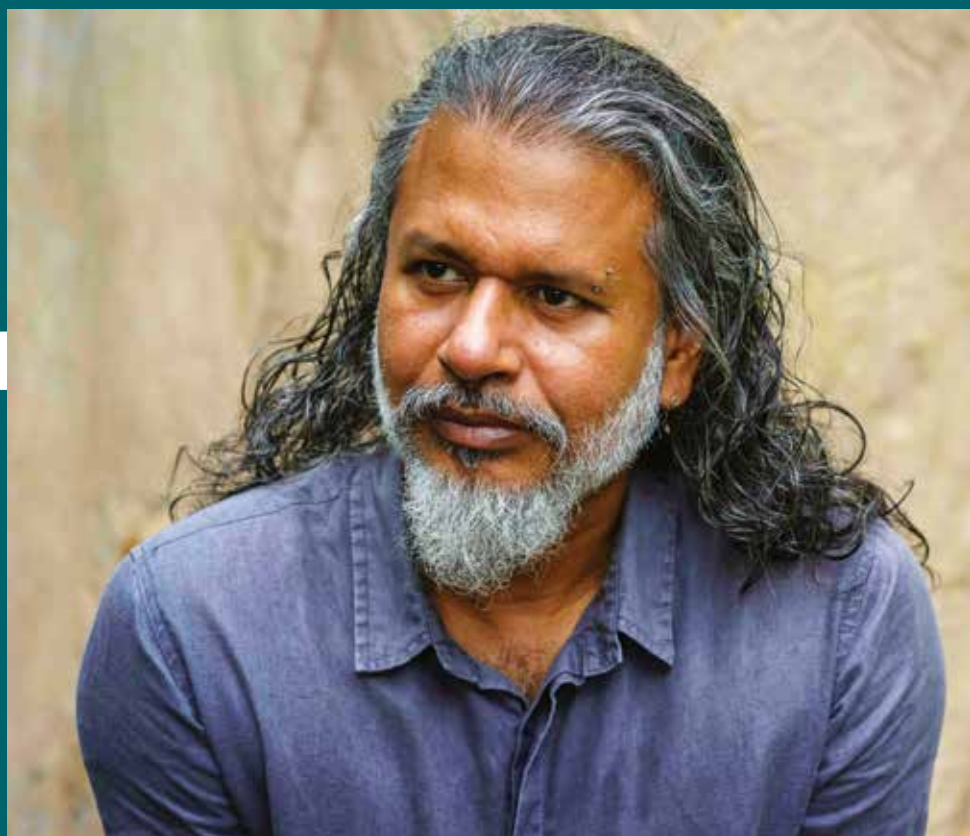
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THE IMMAN WITH THE BOOKER

**Shehan Karunatilaka
delves into some pages
of his life, before and
after The Booker Prize**

He's an insatiable writer and naturally funny (and tongue-in-cheek) most times. His play on words guarantees a smile even in the darkest chapters, but through that comedy, he paints a vivid canvas in tumultuous shades which is what gives him an edge when putting pen to paper or in this instance, manically typing out words on a keyboard.



By Savithri Rodrigo

Shehan Karunatilaka writes and writes – it's what he is passionate about and what he does best. And he has proven it too by being crowned with English literature's most coveted accolade – The Booker Prize.

His initial foray was as a copywriter in advertising and in writing a variety of features covering a multiplicity of genres, most of which have been published internationally. The Guardian, Newsweek, Rolling Stone, GQ, National Geographic, Condé Nast, Wisden, The Cricketer, and The Economic Times all have articles bylined by Karunatilaka.

Winning the crown

The ceremony for The Booker Prize 2022 was at the Roundhouse in London and at the announcement, a rather bemused and almost unbelieving Karunatilaka was literally pushed towards the stage. "It was nothing short of a dream," he says. The Queen Consort at the time presented the award for his book 'The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida' making him the second Sri Lankan to win The Booker. Michael Ondaatje, who lives in England, was the first and it was with The Booker Prize money that Ondaatje established The Gratiaen Prize in Sri Lanka, a prize Karunatilaka won in 2008.

But nothing could have prepared Karunatilaka for the publicity carousel he was pushed onto following the announcement of The Booker. "The whole night after the ceremony, my phone was going 'ping, ping, ping'. I was inundated with messages on WhatsApp, Instagram, and Messenger. Twitter was on fire and all I could think of was getting some sleep. Being on the shortlist of The Booker also meant that prior to the awards, we did readings at various bookstores and venues. But it was

nothing like the spiel I experienced after the ceremony. Interview after interview, everyone wanted to talk to me and organise events for and with me. Not that I'm complaining," he says with a chuckle.

"Who would have thought that as I was sitting in queues and during the Aragalya that this book would go this far? I heard about the longlist while sitting in a queue and all I could think of was, 'Okay, so my book would get published in the UK and get some press.' But then came the shortlist and suddenly it all became a whirlwind."

Life and times

Karunatilaka was born in Galle, grew up in Colombo, studied in New Zealand, and worked in London, Amsterdam and Singapore before returning to Colombo, where he didn't just write, but also played in the rock bands 'Independent Square', 'Powercut Circus' and 'The Brass Monkey Band'. In fact, Karunatilaka admits to having a lifelong obsession with the rock band 'The Police'.

Karunatilaka had been a regular at The Roundhouse before the night of The Booker. It is a popular concert venue for rock bands and naturally, he gravitated towards the circular building during his work years in London. So the territory was familiar to the celebrated writer who mingled with royalty and rock stars that evening (including Dua Lipa).

His schooling initially was at S. Thomas' Preparatory School in Kollupitiya and then at Whanganui Collegiate School in New Zealand. While his family would have preferred the young man to get a 'proper' degree in Business Administration, Karunatilaka enrolled at Massey University and pleased his parents as well as himself, by graduating with a degree in English Literature and Business Administration.

The first chapters

His first novel 'The Painter', yet unpublished, bagged a shortlist at The Gratiaen Prize 2000. Eight years later, he won The Gratiaen for a story about an alcoholic journalist who was determined to track down a missing Sri Lankan left-arm spinner – this book was 'Chinaman: The Legend of Pradeep Mathew'. And that tale combining cricket, mystery, alcohol and liver problems, also secured the Commonwealth Book Prize, the DSC Prize, made the Waterstones 11 list as one of the top debuts of 2011, was shortlisted for the Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize, and adjudged the second Best Cricket Book Ever by Wisden.

He became quite a regular on The Gratiaen shortlist – in 2015 for 'Devil Dance' and 2017 for 'Short Eats' both unpublished at the time. Accolades notwithstanding, Karunatilaka struggled to find an international publisher. 'Devil Dance' was considered 'too esoteric and confusing' with Sri Lankanisms that international readers would find difficult to understand. It did get published in 2020 by Penguin India but with a name change – 'Chats with the Dead'.

However, he wanted to go global. In stepped Sort of Books from the UK. Much slashing, tightening, revisions and two years later, he made history. "I'd say it's the same book, but it benefited from two years of tightening and is much more accessible," Karunatilaka says. "It is a bit confusing to have the same book with two different titles, but I think the eventual play is that 'The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida' will become the definitive title and text."

'Please Don't Put That In Your Mouth'

And there was also the children's book he wrote because "I have been quite traumatised seeing toddlers eating dangerous things. My daughter once licked a wet paintbrush thinking it was ice cream, while my son munches on any insect he can find. But the cautionary tale I envisaged writing turned into something else when silliness overtook it." The result – 'Please Don't Put That In Your Mouth', with illustrations by his artist

ABOUT SHEHAN

ALMA MATER

S. Thomas' Preparatory School, Sri Lanka
Whanganui Collegiate School, New Zealand

BORN IN

Galle, Sri Lanka

QUALIFICATIONS

Degree in English Literature and Business
Administration, Massey University, New Zealand

HOBBIES

Buying instruments that I forget to play

QUIRKY HABIT

I don't do quirk

BUCKET LIST

To write a will

brother Lalith (who was also responsible for the ball diagrams in 'Chinaman' and the cover of 'Chats with the Dead').

Becoming a Booker

Karunatilaka credits the skill of a great editor for weaving the rather complex story of Maali, without it getting complicated for the reader to follow the storyline. "I was blessed with Natania Jansz who, though Sri Lankan, grew up in Britain. When 'Chats with the Dead' struggled to find a publisher, I asked, 'What's wrong with this? Why is India embracing it but no one else?' That's when Natania said, 'It's important that not all instruments play at once. You are a musician and you would appreciate that.' That was the purpose of the edit, to make it clearer for a reader who knows nothing about Sri Lanka and to make sure the different moving parts come in at different times."

Murder mysteries give Karunatilaka an adrenaline rush. "Agatha Christie was my first idol as a writer. The stories were so well plotted and that needed great skill, which is what you need when writing a good murder mystery. So it takes a talented and wonderful editor who sees a book like it is and tells you, 'I think it's terrific but you need to fix the ending and the middle, and maybe the beginning.'"

SHEHAN WOULD LIKE TO

WRITE ABOUT – Insects

TRAVEL TO – Iceland

MEET – Stewart, Andy, and maybe the other guy

LEARN – Either gardening or fighting or poker. All useful skills in the apocalypse

SEE – Nobody for a while

PLAY FOR – None of the teams I support

An author's trepidation

Karunatilaka also explains that when a writer puts a book out into the world, they say a silent prayer, blessing it on its way out. "Most books don't come out to fanfare, they are published to anonymity. A book isn't like a movie premiere or an album drop where there's big hype. So when this book was out, my sentiments were, 'I've worked very hard on this book, it's gone through multiple edits and I'm putting it out there. What people make of it is up to them.' But when I looked at the judges' take on the book, I realised that what I planted there, has landed."

Describing the book as 'angrily comic', Karunatilaka says, "I'm very angry at Sri Lanka, very disappointed in fact. So there's anger in

the books but I love this country. When you're a part of it, you have the sensibility to laugh at things that may not necessarily be good. So the win itself was really heartening because when you've been in your room, typing in the dark and then you find that the world has responded, that is a very satisfying feeling."

The storyteller

"I like telling stories, especially of this murder mystery kind, but my next book may be a lot lighter," says Karunatilaka, adding that he has a number of irons in the fire. "There are many novels – some in the writing stage and others in my head. I've got another book to write anyway, a couple more children's books, and I'm also working on a documentary screenplay."

Confessing to being a slow writer, (he took 15 years to write three books), Karunatilaka explains that he's written a book for each decade. "By the time I get around to writing about the 2022 era, it may be 2032 or 2042," he says, laughing.

Show me the money

The unasked question hangs in the air. What will you do with the prize money? "I'm not going to buy a big car or fancy clothes. I spend my money on guitars, books, good food and drinks. I'll invest in my children's future and maybe someone else's child's future because we must invest in children's futures." And he wants to try his hand at playing bass on one of those guitars and learn to speak Tamil.

His cup surely 'runneth over'!

Photography: ©Dominic Sansoni

SHEHAN'S ADJECTIVES

BOOKS

'Chinaman' – Fun times

'Chats with the Dead' – Strange times

'The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida' – Scary times

'Please Don't Put That In Your Mouth' – Silly

'Where Shall I Poop?' – Masterpiece

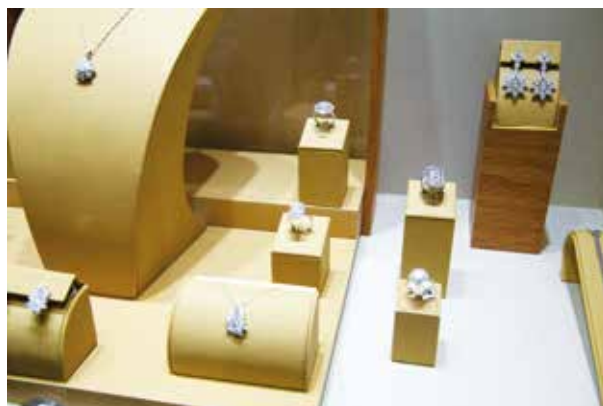
'Those Sneaky Plants' – True story





Colombo Jewellery Stores Launches at OGF Mall

Colombo Jewellery Stores (CJS) celebrated the grand opening of their latest store at One Galle Face on 01 September, with the launch of the Sapphire Island Collection featuring Youth Ambassador for CJS Sade Greenwood. The collection by CJS gave centerstage to Sri Lanka's finest Blue Sapphires, encapsulating the essence of timeless beauty within each statement piece. Check out the highlights!





KIN STUDIO POP-UP

Kin Studio had a Black Friday pop-up sale on 25 November, where enthusiastic buyers came out to indulge in some amazing deals!

Here's how it went!



NATURE GIVES LIFE TO AKZONOBEL'S COLOR OF THE YEAR 2023

AkzoNobel, a leading paints and coatings company and producer of Dulux paints in Sri Lanka, has revealed its highly anticipated Color of the Year 2023: Wild Wonder. A hue inspired by the warm tones of harvested crops, its upbeat glow connects us with nature, creating a sense of energy and positivity.

As people search for support, connection, inspiration and balance in the world today, they're diving into the wonders of the natural world to find it. Extensive research conducted by a team of in-house paints and coatings color experts and international design professionals have found hope at the heart of global social, design, and consumer trends.

"Wild Wonder speaks to us in a language we instinctively understand," says Heleen van Gent, Creative Director of AkzoNobel's Global Aesthetic Center. "Nature is what inspires us and makes us feel better in our lives and in our homes. That's why, for the first time in 20 years, our entire color palette is inspired by the rhythms of nature."

Four Dulux decorative paint color palettes have been designed around Wild Wonder (Winter's Silence, 50YY 49/191): Lush Colors (the forest hues), Buzz Colors (meadow brights), Raw Colors (harvest shades) and Flow Colors (seashore tones). For consumers personalizing their homes and urban environments, the palettes make it easy to choose wall colors for a timeless look that's also bang on trend.

"As concerns about mental health increase around the world, creating a home that feels in touch with the natural world couldn't be timelier," says Oscar Wezenbeek, Managing Director of AkzoNobel Decorative

Paints, South East Asia and South Asia. "We need a space that can give us support in challenging times; somewhere that brings a hint of the outdoors, the echo of a landscape, and a sense of belonging. Wild Wonder and its complementary color palettes can help our consumers feel inspired by the wonders of the world and bring some of that natural magic into their homes."

"When consumers set out to transform their living spaces, they find assurance in our color expertise and guidance," explains Wasantha Heenatigala, Managing Director of AkzoNobel Sri Lanka. "Through Color of the Year 2023, we also look forward to fostering stronger collaborations with industry partners and inspiring creativity and experimentation to create unique, human-centered solutions that will uplift homes, offices, and communities."

The year 2023 brings two major milestones for AkzoNobel's Global Aesthetic Center. Its ColourFutures trend forecast will celebrate its 20th anniversary, while the team also reaches

three decades of trend analysis, color research, color design, and art direction at AkzoNobel.

For more information about the Color of the Year 2023, visit www.dulux.lk and follow #CF23 on social media.



IT'S ABOUT DRIVE, PASSION, DEDICATION & NAILS

Noeline Pereira's passion for entrepreneurship stems from her workaholic persona but it's all about balance.

By Savithri Rodrigo

But Pereira herself is not just about nails and lashes. The trick to her very bubbly persona which she describes as "a huge extrovert with minor introvert qualities", is that she stays busy creating brands and achieving goals. "I have to be active every day, whether it be a small walk, going to the gym, playing badminton or swimming," she explains.

Pereira's initial foray into entrepreneurship was collaborating on her husband's passion project – Camera.lk. "We had goals and targets and we both vigorously worked on achieving these, which we did. Later, I wanted to start something that reflects my beliefs, imagination, and passion and that's how Noeline's came into play."

It's always those little details that add panache to anyone's final look and Noeline Pereira is one of those who is responsible for that panache. The young entrepreneur is the founder of Noeline's, which prides itself on being the best one-stop salon in Colombo, offering the most incredible salon experience ever – she says.



ABOUT NOELINE

BORN IN: Sri Lanka

BIRTHDAY: 5 July

FAMILY: Parents Mary and Francis,
Older sister Bernie, Husband Anushka

HOBBIES: Watching random documentaries

MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT: Star gazing in the middle of the
night while climbing Adam's Peak

ALMA MATERS: Sacred Heart Convent, Galle,
St. Joseph's Secondary School, Ontario, University of Guelph, Ontario,
University of Bedfordshire, England

QUALIFICATIONS:

BBA – Double Major – Finance and HR

MBA – Marketing

ALWAYS WANTED TO BE:

Happy and successful

**BIGGEST
CHALLENGE:
BEING A
WORKAHOLIC**



WOULD
LOVE TO
WORK WITH:
ANYONE
DEDICATED

NOELINE'S FAVES

CUISINE: Japanese | **DRINK:** Fresh fruit juice

RESTAURANT: Too many

CITY: New York | **COUNTRY:** Lots

CHILL OUT: No place like home

NOELINE WOULD LOVE TO

TRAVEL TO: Santorini | **VACATION:** Anywhere tropical

TRAVEL WITH: Family and friends

MEET: Meet my grandparents and
tell them I've done them proud

LEARN: To play guitar | **ATTEMPT:** To be a singer



There were two things that prompted the salon. Pereira loved having her nails done and she found a huge gap in terms of innovation in the beauty industry. "My goal was to provide a one-stop location for nails, facials, hair, and whatever else we could pamper the ladies with."

However, Noeline's doesn't leave the men and children out. The men all enjoy some TLC while Sweet Sassy by Noeline's is all for the children. "In reality, it's not just about nails. It's your second home. Every detail in the salon makes you feel at home. The entire space is purpose-designed for that."

Pereira manages both businesses – Camera. lk and Noeline's, leading the teams to answer that all-important question, "How can we make our customers ecstatic about our service?"

Pereira began her schooling at Sacred Heart Convent, Galle but while their children were yet small, Pereira's parents Mary and Francis took their two daughters and migrated to Canada. This is where Pereira then went into secondary school. Both girls were fully involved in extracurriculars, especially sports which explains Pereira's need to stay active all the time. Her very supportive parents allowed their daughters to excel in

what they could and never forced them to do what they couldn't; Pereira calls them, "My Hype Club!"

No stranger to hard work and burning the candle at both ends, Pereira worked two jobs to cover her university expenses. "I was exposed to the true grind which has made me who I am today," she says. "I worked part-time in a bank and the plan was to move up in the hierarchy and get into real estate. But then I met Anushka and started helping him out in his business. We needed more commitment to the business when we realised we could win it. So I quit my job and moved back to Sri Lanka to grow the business."

This modern-day young woman who met her future husband on social media back in the day when the world only had Hi5 and Messenger, dispels the theory of love at first sight. "He asked me out when I was in grade 12 and I did not like that. I stopped talking to him but then we met in Sri Lanka after seven years and the rest is history. We have been happily married for 10 years now."

And that marriage has been built on the strength of little things and keeping romance alive. "Honestly,

it's the little things like going on dates, holding hands, talking about things that matter to me, and even doing the grocery shopping together. Anushka goes the extra mile however, he loves giving me surprises and of course, I just love all of them. But for me, more than the scale of the surprise, it's the thought that counts."

Pereira believes very strongly in self-care and takes a day off to help boost her productivity and balance work, home, and family. The husband and wife take weekends off but work time gets their one hundred percent. "Peace of mind is of utmost importance because when your mind is at peace, all else falls into place."

But she is a driven young woman, loving the feeling of achievement and working towards a purpose. She is also super optimistic and positive about life, always seeing challenges as opportunities. "The minute I see an opportunity, I drive myself to reap the fullest benefit." And her words of advice to those with a similar passion for entrepreneurship is, "Focus and consistency. Stay consistent. Results don't come overnight and never stop learning."

Being the lively and energetic human being she is, Pereira's bucket list is overflowing – skydiving, getting a bike licence and a bike, and feeding an entire village forever – "which is the biggest one!"

NOELINE'S MUST-HAVES

IN THE MORNING – Hot water

AT NIGHT – Huge comforter to snuggle

IN THE HANDBAG – Phone

IN THE CAR – Shades

WORKING OUT – Water

FOOD – Pho and rolls (beef soup)

COMPANION – Family and friends

CLOTHES – Ripped jeans with white T

ACCESSORY – A bag

MAKEUP – Hydrating mist

PAINTING HUMAN CANVASES,

For the longest time, tattoos have been a rather taboo topic in Sri Lanka. The permanent ink and unconventional designs on one's body have often been stigmatised and negatively perceived in the local community.

However, as a nation that's brimming with creativity and abundant talent, the once-shamed tattoo industry is now emerging out of the shadows, bringing together people from all walks of life to enjoy their creative freedom and quite literally wear their personality on their skin.

Dimmu Fernando's journey – from a shy boy who always loved to draw, to entering a random tattoo studio with his lover at the time, and eventually rising as the underdog to a now, highly sought-after professional – is one that's truly worth celebrating.

By Nishara Fernando

WHO IS DIMMU FERNANDO?

Everyone knows me as a tattoo artist and I've been practising for about 13-14 years now. I also teach yoga and meditation. At the moment, I run my own studio in Ja-Ela called GoodFellas. I have a team of six passionate guys and I've also trained many tattoo artists around the country who now have their own studios. Over the past 13 years, I believe I've been able to produce some really good artists who are quite well-known in Sri Lanka today.

DIMMU FERNANDO'S RISE FROM APPRENTICESHIP TO SPEARHEADING SRI LANKA'S TATTOO INDUSTRY





WHAT WERE YOU LIKE GROWING UP?

I never wanted to be a tattoo artist per se. Since I was a child, I always loved to draw. I always had my drawing books, pastels, and pencils with me wherever I went. I would say I was a little disconnected as a child (laughs). Even during family gatherings, you would have seen me drawing in a corner and I wasn't very social.

I would draw all the time. It was my way of expressing myself as a child. I was never one to have an ambition growing up, but I wanted to see where the future would take me and see what came my way. Just like that, I happened to randomly stumble into the tattoo industry.

WHAT MADE YOU TAKE THE LEAP OF FAITH INTO TATTOO ARTISTRY?

I always believed in my drawing skills. I randomly met this tattoo artist in Ja-Ela, Suren Fernando, who's now tattooing in Italy. One of my girlfriends at the time went to him to get a tattoo; I had never walked into a studio before. I was about 20 years old.

Suren was working on a tattoo and we were waiting for our appointment. They took a break and he was struggling to get a design done, which was an old-school tribal design. I happened to be drawing on a piece of paper and I told him, 'Hey, I sort of have an idea. Do you want me to do a drawing and see if the client likes it?' – because frankly, it looked pretty simple to me.

So I did a design on the spot and the client liked it! After that day, he called me and asked if I wanted to see if this was something I'd like to do. I wasn't working at the time, so I agreed and I picked up pretty fast.

WHAT KIND OF SERVICES DOES GOODFELLAS OFFER?

We do tattoos, piercings, and permanent make-up (eyebrow microblading, etc). We also sell aftercare products and have our own GoodFellas clothing line.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU HAVE FOR ASPIRING TATTOO ARTISTS?

Number 1 – get a good mentor. There are a lot of tattoo academies and schools popping up, but I doubt they will give you the exposure and experience you need to become an all-around artist.

When you work with a mentor, you get to know a lot about the craft. Most of what I learnt was from my mentor and he was open to my suggestions about getting certain types of needles, machines, techniques, etc. If you have a good mentor, it will easily shape half of your career. The rest you need to build on your own.

So start drawing and really listen to what the experts have to say. You might have different ideas from your mentor but just listen to them. You can incorporate your own twist later.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS?

At the beginning of my career, I wanted to become a really good artist. I wanted to be one of the best and do something for the country and its emerging industry back then. I think I did my part in exposing a new generation of artists and introducing more people to this kind of style and art.

When we were starting out, everyone was still hating on the industry. They didn't understand the complexity and aesthetics of tattooing. It

was really hard and as an artist, I really wanted to push people to embrace it and experience it in a way that we artists want them to experience it. This was my main goal, along with being one of the really good artists in Sri Lanka.

Sometimes I push myself too much to be the best and do the best thing, but I think it's all work-related. That's how we should look at it – to always strive to be the best version of yourself.

SRI LANKA IS A WIDELY CONSERVATIVE NATION. WHAT ARE SOME COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT TATTOOS?

I think the whole stigma is because people don't know how tattooing works. Not knowing how the procedure is done, how hygienic it is, and not knowing the quality of tattoo studios these days – that's where the stigma comes from.

People see a lot of old tattoos that haven't been done properly. They see tattoos that have gone too deep in the skin, which have been blurred with a lot of ink bleeds. That discourages people from getting one done themselves.

I believe this whole stigma will be reversed once we start showcasing how well it's done now, through conventions, promotional videos, social media, etc. I think the situation is improving because people now walk into tattoo studios with their friends and get to see the process themselves. They also see how well the artists are educated about cross-contamination, how they maintain top-class hygiene and use the latest gear.

HOW DO YOU PICTURE THE FUTURE OF TATTOO ARTISTRY IN SRI LANKA?

It's going to be really great and there are going to be a lot of great tattoo artists.

The equipment available now is top notch too. Updating my gear has changed my game as an artist and I believe the industry is going to go crazy. There are so many artists now who produce some amazing work with these machines. Even my mum can tattoo with these new wireless machines. It's so easy, convenient, and sophisticated and does not damage the skin.

So in a few years, I'm sure we'll see a lot of innovation, new styles and techniques and I'm truly looking forward to it!



THE WORLD IS CALLING THIS CHRISTMAS

By Nirma Kumarasiri

It can be difficult to decide where to spend the holiday season if you want to see snow. In December, the northern hemisphere often experiences a whiteout. Because of this, it's pointless to try to tell people where they should go to have a white Christmas. Instead, we compiled some of the world's most spectacular spots for a white Christmas based on reviews from the internet. Be prepared to explore by having all the necessary winter gear with you.

IN THE MEANTIME, EUROPE AWAITS.



Several European countries have snow in December. For the most part, those living above the Arctic Circle do. There's no denying that Europe offers countless opportunities for a white Christmas.

In addition to the traditional Christmas activities – waking up to an inch of new snow on Christmas morning – a European Christmas also features snow-capped mountains, sleigh rides, and Christmas markets.

Like the Polish ski resort of Zakopane.

During the winter, when the town takes on the appearance of a winter wonderland, it becomes a popular tourist destination in Poland.



Despite being surrounded by beautiful landscapes year-round, viewing snow-capped mountains is particularly magnificent. Because of its location at the foot of the Tatra Mountains, Zakopane offers numerous chances for day trips and sightseeing.

Zakopane is a great place to take the kids because there is so much to see and do, like taking skiing or snowboarding lessons. Grab a toboggan at the booth on your way up to Mt. Gubalowka, and slide down the hill for some exciting fun.

Located conveniently close to the heart of the city, the summit of the mountain features stunning vistas and some of the best local cuisine in the region.



CROSS THE ATLANTIC AND VISIT NORTH AMERICA.

Even though Christmas movies are somewhat to blame for the widespread desire to spend the holidays somewhere warm and tropical rather than in the snow, North America offers plenty of opportunities for a truly magical winter celebration. The United States of America is not the only country where this occurs.

Located in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley, Big White is one of Canada's premier ski resorts. It's the kind of winter splendour that makes you feel like Christmas has come early.

Big White is best known as a world-class downhill ski resort, but it also offers plenty of other winter activities that are perfect for a white Christmas.

Nothing says "Christmas" like a sleigh ride pulled by horses while sipping hot chocolate.

Furthermore, Canada is calling your name this holiday season with its pristine snow. It's no secret that Québec City, Canada, is a go-to spot for snowy Christmas vacations with the family.

When snow falls, this picturesque village, full of old-world charm, becomes a winter wonderland. Take your kids on a stroll around Old Québec's cobblestone streets and see their faces light up.

The winding streets lined with stores along the St. Lawrence River are decked out in festive garlands and illuminated by thousands of lights at night. Travel south to Chenil La Poursuite to try your hand at dog sledding through the snowy forests of Québec on a day trip.



Or, if you're a skiing family, head to the Village Vacances Valcartier, home to some of the world's few ice hotels as well as ski slopes and snow tubing. Make sure Québec city headquarters is conveniently located near all the action.



The Fairmont Le Château Frontenac, in the heart of Old Québec City, is one of the most photographed hotels in the world.

DO YOU EVER THINK ABOUT CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS IN INDIA?

Srinagar is one of the most stunning destinations in all of India.

Some of the many things to do in Srinagar are taking a shikara ride on Dal Lake, shopping at one of the floating marketplaces, riding the gondola at Gulmarg, exploring Betaab Valley, and staying on a houseboat.

Srinagar's Christmas celebrations are nothing like those depicted in Hollywood movies. It takes place in a tranquil, serene setting with light snowfall.



At St. Mary's Church, where the age-old superstition that snow is a blessing is put to the test with a specific prayer, and snowfall is met with a special prayer. This prayer attracts devotees from all around India.

Among the many fun things to do in Gulmarg with kids is skiing. Pony rides, shikara rides, and other exciting activities are also available. There is also a winter festival where people can go snow cycling, ice skating, and sled racing.



Alternatively, taking a White Christmas Tour of Japan could be the best decision you ever made for a Christmas vacation. If you ever visit Japan, be prepared to be awed by the abundance of stunning ornamentation. Participate in the customs and ceremonies before Japan's most important holiday, New Year's Day.

The breathtaking natural splendour of the countryside at this time of year competes with the attention paid to the temples, shrines, and Japanese castles. Bonus: The winter months are when you can get your hands on the freshest seafood and other holiday treats.



Although most Japanese people are not Christians, Christmas in Japan retains many of its traditional trappings. The holiday spirit is brought to life by all the bright lights and festive displays that line the streets and storefronts. This time of year is typically calmer because Christmas is not a nationally recognised event.



As Covid-19 has begun to ease across the planet, don't be afraid to spread your wings and jet off to a winter wonderland with your loved ones; the world is full of possibilities for those who are willing to explore it.

KEROFF FASHION SHOW AFTER PARTY

Sri Lankan couturier Indi Yapa Abeywardena's Spring Summer 2023 fashion show held on 18 November, made its way to Sequel at Cinnamon Grand for the Keroff after party featuring live entertainment by Luminosity & Nish on Sax along with guest DJs Ace, Trev D and Niranjana.

Here are some highlights of the night!



Sadani

Shenalee

Nicole

Diandra



Maheeka

Dylan

Sanuja



Pritiva

Sachindri

Shehanka

Treshan



Sachindri

Indi

Nisansala



Shanelle



Deepak

Ayesh

Shehara

Senuri



Iman



Udara

Maheeka

Sanjula



Kamal

Mikael

Shohan



Sayuri

Harini

Ayesh



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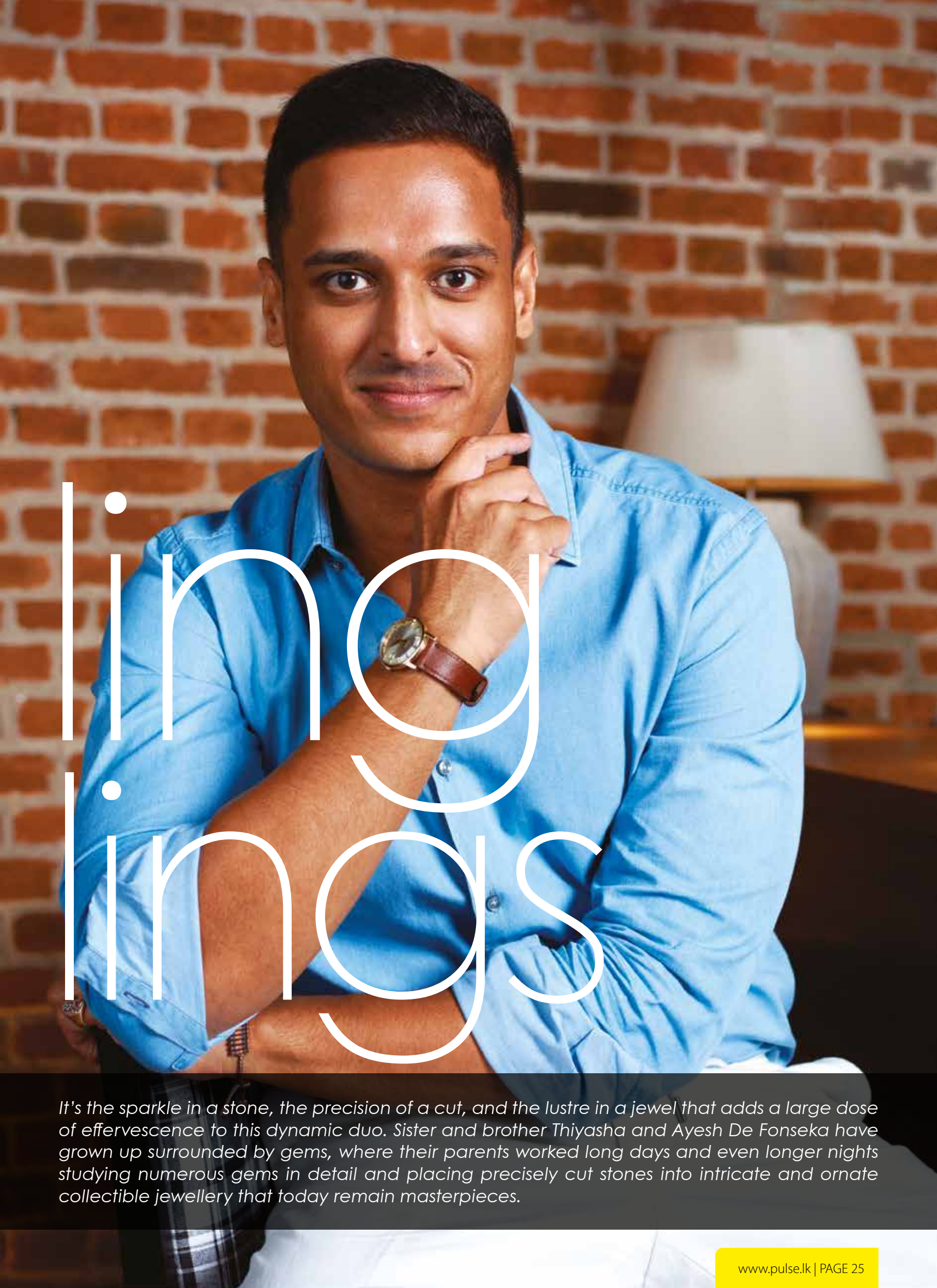
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Spork Sib

Thiyasha and Ayesh De Fonseka reflect on their business, families, and life in general



lin ings

It's the sparkle in a stone, the precision of a cut, and the lustre in a jewel that adds a large dose of effervescence to this dynamic duo. Sister and brother Thiyasha and Ayesha De Fonseka have grown up surrounded by gems, where their parents worked long days and even longer nights studying numerous gems in detail and placing precisely cut stones into intricate and ornate collectible jewellery that today remain masterpieces.





By Savithri Rodrigo

THE BEGINNINGS

Tiesh began life not as Tiesh but as Lakmini (Pvt) Limited which was founded by Lasantha and Bryony in the mid-1990s, over 25 years ago, in Kandy. Primarily attracting tourists who would enjoy spending time in the showroom which still stands today – ‘oohing’ and ‘aahing’ at the beautiful gemstones and jewellery the store showcased – the De Fonsekas decided to coin their children’s names and brand their jewellery Tiesh by Lakmini.

But this chapter of the family’s life came into being on their return after a five year stint in Australia. The De Fonsekas left for Australia in 1990 when Thiyasha was eight and her younger brother was seven. Childhood for the siblings in two countries was a very exciting prospect indeed – Australia where their mother’s relatives were, and Sri Lanka where her dad’s relatives resided. Growing up in the Australian suburbs, the children went to primary school in Sydney – Thiyasha to St. John’s Primary School and Ayesh to Trinity Primary School – but on their return to Sri Lanka, they enrolled for their secondary education at Good Shepherd Convent, Kandy and Trinity College, Kandy. However, they both returned to Sydney to embark on their higher academics at Macquarie University.

It’s uncanny how both siblings seem to always be in sync with each other. Not only did they have their higher education at the same university, but they both went on to work at Westpac Banking Corporation once qualified.

Thiyasha believes that if she didn’t venture into the family business, she would have pursued a career in law, while Ayesh feels that banking would have been his calling if he didn’t return to Sri Lanka. But on reflection he says, “I do love sports, playing it and being involved competitively. So maybe something on the lines of sports administration or management may also have been a possibility.”

While Thiyasha says there may have been an unwritten understanding that the children would return and embrace the legacy of Tiesh to carry it forward, Ayesh begs to differ. “I had finished my business degree and was in the corporate world in Sydney. One time I came home to Sri Lanka for a holiday with every intention of remaining in Australia and making it my home. But on my return to Sydney, I realised I was a changed person. I knew that if I didn’t come back to Sri Lanka and help my parents continue strengthening Tiesh, the legacy would dissolve into just being a dream.”



"My parents started Tiesh from scratch. It wasn't handed down to them nor was it a family business."

*"I would confidently say
we have now created
our own niche in the
industry."*





Ayesh is Inspired by:
CEO and Chief Mentor of ThreeEQ,
Jason Ma



AYESH'S FACT FILE

DATE OF BIRTH

September 4, 1983

FAMILY

Wife: Mihiri

Son: Dineth

ALMA MATERS

Trinity Primary School, Sydney,
Australia

Trinity College, Kandy, Sri Lanka

HIGHER EDUCATION

Macquarie University, Sydney,
Australia

HOBBIES

Listening to music, playing sports

PHOBIA

Claustrophobia

BAD HABIT

Short fuse

ROLE MODEL

Roger Federer

AYESH'S FAVOURITE

GEM

Blue sapphire

DESIGNER

Tom Ford

BRAND

Gucci

CLOTHES

White shirt

ACCESSORY

Watch

FOOD

Pizza

BEVERAGE

Coke

SPORT

Tennis

AYESH'S BUCKET LIST

DESTINATION

Santorini

COUNTRY

Egypt

MEET

Roger Federer

SKILL

Speak more languages

AYESH'S CHRISTMAS SPECIALS

FOOD

Roast lamb

DRINK

Mulled wine

WEAR

Christmas sweater

PLACE TO BE

London

SPEND WITH

Family

SONG

The Christmas song

FAVOURITE MEMORY

Christmas tree lit up at night with
beautiful ornaments

CHRISTMAS EVE

Go to midnight mass and return home
for cake and coffee

CHRISTMAS DAY

Family lunch at parents' home in Kandy

“Each day over the past three years has been challenging but I look on the bright side, working hard to make tomorrow better for us and our team at Tiesh.”

Hence, both had a mission. Moving back from Sydney, they joined the business immediately thereafter, working closely with their parents to learn what brings that infinite shine to the ultimate trade of gems and jewellery. Having established the brand in Kandy, the siblings then decided to venture into Colombo, with much success. “This was in 2014,” says Ayesh. “We expanded our clientele adding Sri Lankans into the already established foreign client portfolio, because we wanted to bring the entirety of our experiences and legacy we had with unique Ceylon sapphires and artisanal jewellery into the spotlight. I would confidently say we have now created our own niche in the industry.”

LEARNING FROM THE BEST

“What I remember most when growing up was how unbelievably hard-working my parents were and the many sacrifices they made along the way,” recalls Thiyasha. Ayesh echoes those sentiments stating, “My parents started Tiesh from scratch. It wasn’t handed down to them nor was it a family business. Their dedication, hard work and perseverance are what has built this business into what it is today.”

For Thiyasha, watching her parents handle situations astutely and with great tact has been a learning experience. “Handling human resources in Sri Lanka is a completely new study altogether,” she says with a smile, “and the most challenging in management. But we watch, learn and absorb the experience they both model through their words and actions, into our daily work routine.”

Ayesh affirms that his overseas study and work experience have helped immensely in strategising the business, in his quest for astute systems, processes and new manufacturing ideas. “I’ve been in the business for 13 years now, but each day, I learn something new.” Being a family business, it’s not that there aren’t bones of contention, but as Thiyasha says, “These strengthen the business because





we talk it out and come up with the best decision for the business as a whole." Adds Ayesh, "We sit together and discuss issues, which is the easiest way to resolve conflict because we realise how the other person feels about something and arrive at a mutual agreement on moving forward."

FAMILY AND LOVE

While the sheen on the business kept getting polished with the two young ones well steeped in it, both Ayesh and Thiyasha's personal lives too took on additional glitter. They both found their life partners and got married. Thiyasha was introduced to Haren by a mutual friend *and said* "I do" two years ago. She recalls his proposal on her birthday as the most romantic gesture she has ever experienced.

Ayesh has been married to Mihiri for 10 years now. He met her at a New Year's Eve dinner dance in Kandy and the spark that ignited has remained aflame ever since. They have a five-year-old son and Ayesh says, "They are the best thing that has happened to me." Being a good cook, Ayesh does rustle up a dinner for two once in a while, which is the most romantic he feels he is, but a 10th-anniversary gift by Mihiri with a romantic dinner in the beautiful environs of W15 in Hantane stands out for him as the most romantic memory he has ever experienced.

The family is very close but more so, the siblings, and that is probably the reason for that uncanny and almost unconscious habit of one echoing what the other does. Never does a day go by without Ayesh checking in on Thiyasha or vice versa, which is a very tangible display of the closeness the De Fonseka family has. But there's yet another reason they are so close. Thiyasha and Ayesh share the same birthday just one year apart. "It's a rare phenomenon," says Ayesh, "like having a twin who is one year older."

Despite her infant son taking up much of her time, Thiyasha juggles work and family time, adding a personal trainer to her 'keep fit' regime and eating as healthy as possible (a difficult task since she confesses to loving her food too much). On a work day, she drops into the office with Tavish in tow for a day's work

"We had to remove ourselves from the sapphires and diamonds we had been used to and focus on a new spectrum of jewellery and manufacturing."

THIYASHA'S FACT FILE

BIRTHDAY

September 4

FAMILY

Husband: Haren | Son: Tavish
Pet: Pablo, the chocolate lab

ALMA MATERS

St. John's Primary School, Sydney, Australia
Good Shepherd Convent, Kandy, Sri Lanka

HOBBIES

Dancing

HIGHER EDUCATION

Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

PHOBIAS

Heights, cockroaches

QUIRKY HABIT

"Scratching my eyes out, literally from their sockets."

ROLE MODELS

Parents

THIYASHA'S FAVOURITE

GEM

Blue sapphire

DESIGNER

Lots of local designers

BRAND

Christian Dior

CLOTHES

Chic

ACCESSORY

Cocktail rings

CHILL OUT

At home with husband and son

FOOD

Anything and everything

BEVERAGE

G&T

SPORT

Tennis

PERSONALITY

Tiffany Haddish, a true survivor who never gave up on her dreams

LEADER

Lee Kuan Yew who worked for his country without ulterior motives

THIYASHA'S BUCKET LIST

DESTINATION

Havana

COUNTRY

Cuba

TO MEET

Barack Obama

SKILL

Sewing

THIYASHA'S CHRISTMAS SPECIALS

FOOD:

Mother's roast chicken

DRINK:

Mulled wine all day and all night

WEAR:

Something Christmassy

PLACE TO BE:

Parents' home in Kandy

SPEND WITH:

Family

SONG:

Jim Reeves' Christmas carols and songs

FAVOURITE MEMORY:

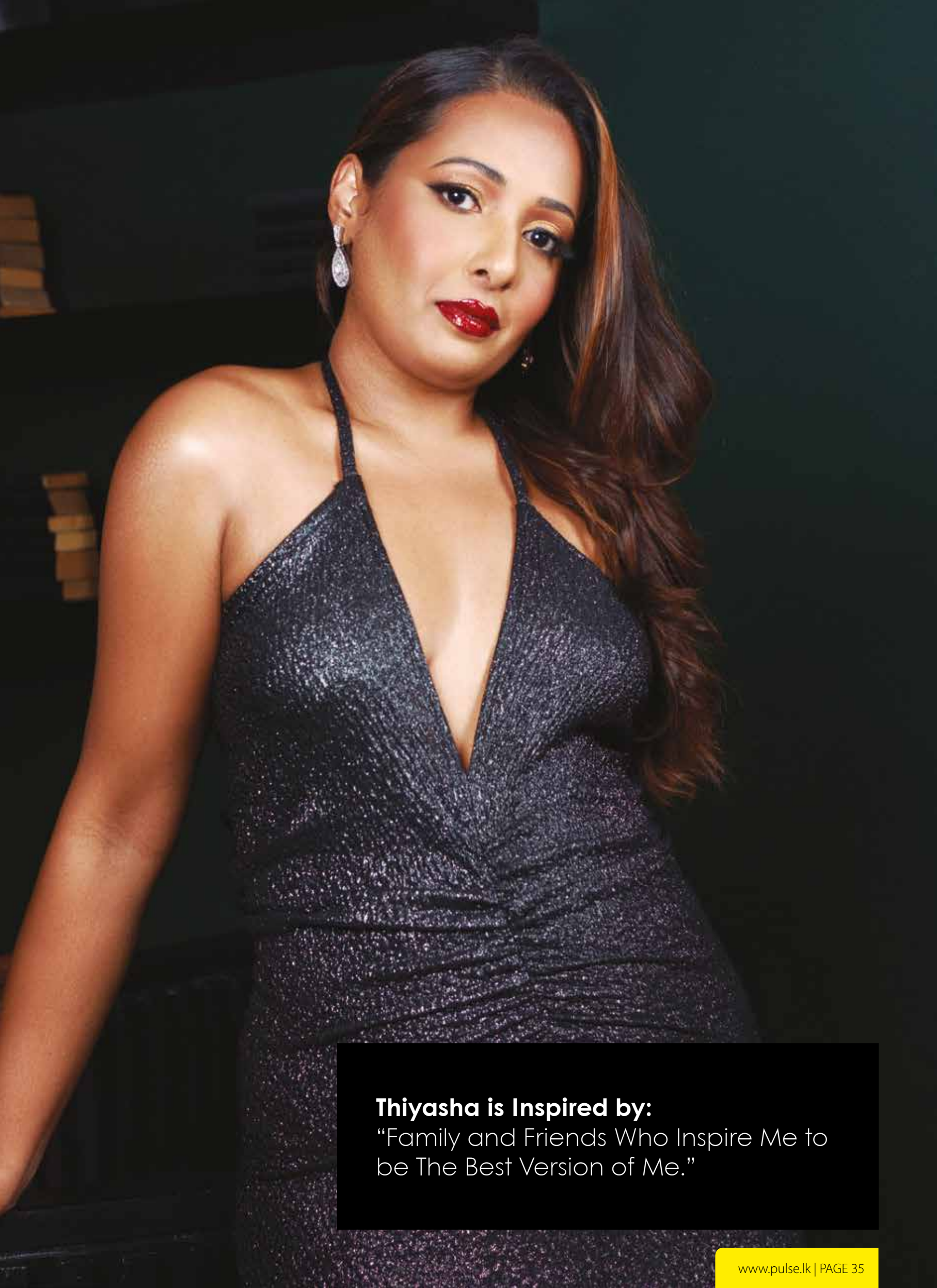
Parents made a little hamper for each of the siblings with Kandos chocolates when they were children

CHRISTMAS EVE:

Wrap all the gifts, put them under the tree, and go for midnight mass

CHRISTMAS DAY:

Family lunch at parents' home in Kandy



Thiyasha is Inspired by:

“Family and Friends Who Inspire Me to be The Best Version of Me.”



which includes working on new collections and overall management.

Ayesh is as domesticated in a way – waking up quite early, getting his son ready and dropped off at school. “I then come back and get ready for my workday, which is usually a 9 to 6 schedule, after which I go for my regular workout and get back home for some family time.” And that workout regime is on 5 to 6 days of the week augmented by eating healthy with plenty of leafy greens and clean proteins.

“Actually the pandemic helped me get back into shape,” he says. “I used all that useless unproductive time as a positive for myself.”

LOOKING AHEAD

But as both observe, nothing has been easy in the last three years. “Trying to survive the pandemic and the economic crisis has been a herculean task,” says Ayesh. “Each day over the past three years has been challenging but I look on the bright side, working hard to make tomorrow better for us and our team at Tiesh.”

Thiyasha remembers how Covid-19 knocked them off their feet. “It definitely taught us how to manage our business and investments in any eventuality and as a person, it taught me to live each day in the best way possible and not postpone anything, because tomorrow is not guaranteed.”

In retrospect, Ayesh looks at the lessons learnt. “It is about having a Plan B and Plan C. Since the civil war ended in 2009, I have only seen upward trends and we were able to grow



steadily, but the pandemic changed all that. What it did teach us was not to put all our eggs in one basket. It's about diversifying."

Hence the change over the past few years has been to step away from familiarity. "Under the sub-brand Pure Gold by Tiesh, we ventured into the 22ct gold market in wedding jewellery," explains Ayesh. "We had to remove ourselves from the sapphires and diamonds we had been used to and focus on a new spectrum of jewellery and manufacturing. It

has been about 18 months since the launch of Pure Gold by Tiesh and we are seeing the rewards of our hard work coming through."

Moving forward, while Thiyasha thinks of the immediate – working on new collections for Tiesh and keeping herself busy with the overall management of the company (not to mention a one-year-old who she describes as 'the happiest baby'), Ayesh has some tangible yet lofty goals. "Keep improving myself as an individual, business person, husband,

and father, and in the business; make Tiesh a household name as the best jewellery business, not just in Sri Lanka, but one of the best in the world."

Photography: Evgeniia Zorina Photography

Location: 1864, Galle Face Hotel

Hair and Makeup: Pabzlooch Beauty

Jewellery: Tiesh

Wardrobe: Hameedia and Charini Design Studio



Hilton Colombo Celebrates Oktoberfest!

Hilton Colombo hosted the biggest beer festival in Colombo in celebration of Oktoberfest 2022. The evening was accompanied by spectacular live performances, drinking showdowns, and foamy pints of joy, that brought the best of the Bavarian experience right to its patrons!





FESTIVE RETAIL COLLECTION BY CHARINI

Take a glimpse of the launch of the Festive Retail Collection by CHARINI that took place on 04 November at Deanston Place, Colombo 03.



Alison



Ramani



Tania



Danu



Sajeira



Eraj

Charini



Asheila

Thiyasha



Inaf



Thushen



Pritiva



Shehanka



Dilrukshi

1864

A LIMITED EDITION DINING EXPERIENCE

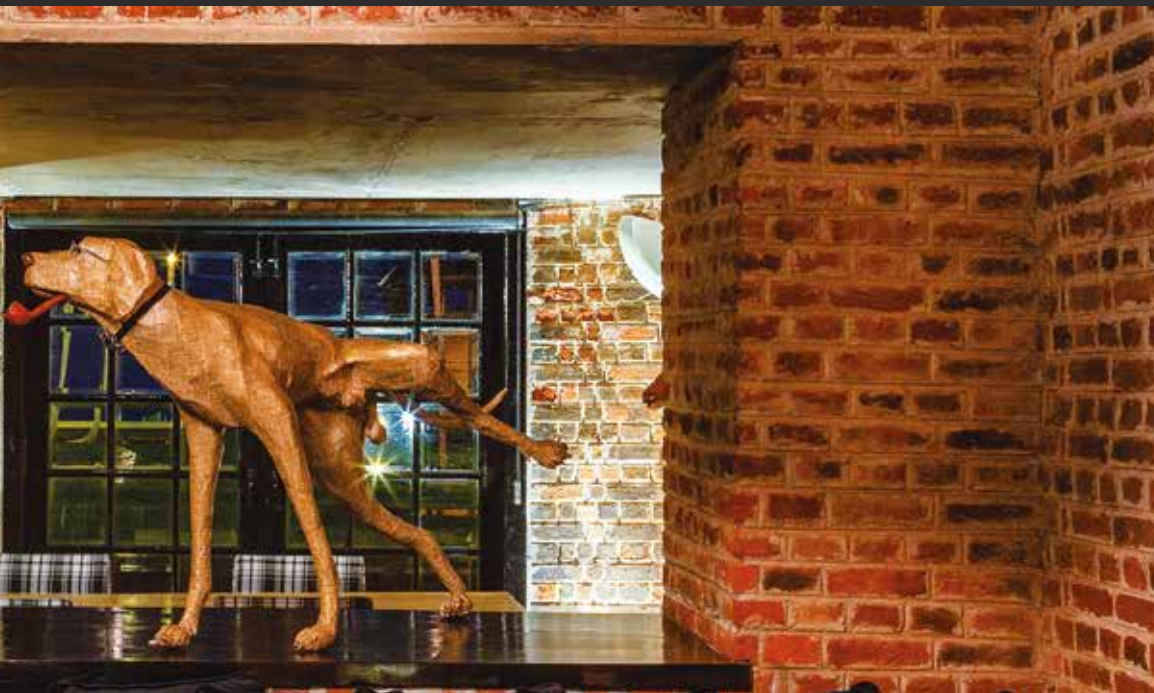


'1864 Limited Edition' is the newest addition to the Galle Face Hotel's fine collection of restaurants. It is a Gastro Chic restaurant and bar with a contemporary European menu curated by former Michelin-starred chef, Bjorn Van de Horst, and directed by Catherine Obrenovic.

Named after the formative year that four British entrepreneurs opened the landmark hotel, 1864 has always been one of the more upper-class dining experiences that Colombo had to offer until the restaurant closed in 2019. After their most recent success with FireBeach, Catherine and Bjorn reopened this landmark restaurant under its new name; '1864 Limited Edition'.

From the unique pieces by Sri Lankan artists across each section of the venue to a carefully curated menu with room to grow and evolve, alongside fascinating signature cocktails that are one-of-a-kind, the restaurant offers its patrons an unprecedented fine-dining experience right in the heart of Colombo.





By Shalinda Halpé

THE AMBIANCE AND AESTHETIC

'1864 Limited Edition' has transformed a space that is centuries old into something that's modern, elegant and contemporary whilst keeping a few of its original elements (such as the hints of colonial architecture, the polished wooden floors and exposed brick walls) intact. The restaurant has been divided into three separate sections, each with its own personality and function, playing a role that will give patrons a "limited edition" experience.

Once you walk into the restaurant through the inner wing of Galle Face Hotel, you find yourself standing in the 1864 bar; one with a bold and modern aesthetic with a subtly regal flare, thanks to its navy and emerald colours all across the seating areas. The iconic 1864 bar, with its mirror finish and circle cutout, stands in the centre of the room, proudly displaying a collection of spirits that includes (arguably) the largest collection of whiskeys in a Colombo establishment.

Walking through the bar, you find yourself in the main dining area, which starkly juxtaposes the bold emerald and navy colours, with its black-and-white monochrome setting. The neutral colours of the dining area serve as a blank canvas for the vibrant food, drinks and artwork in the room to be the centre of attention. The windows in the restaurant that used to give an ocean view have also been closed off, to provide a more intimate dining experience that helps focus on what's most important at '1864 - Limited Edition': the food, the art and the company.

The stairwell in the bar takes you down to 'Animal House'; the newly renovated wine cellar of the restaurant. Named after the plethora of artwork featuring sunglass-laden animals across the entire room, 'Animal House' serves as a private area for enjoying a drink or a smoke, as well as a unique venue for private dinners or events. The restaurant encourages patrons of Animal House to have a conversation with Chef Bjorn to make a custom dinner menu for 8-10 diners, or canapes for up to 25 guests.

The artwork in all three areas of the restaurant plays an important role in the ethos of the restaurant, featuring vibrant and abstract pieces in the monochrome restaurant area, and more muted pieces in the elegant and bold bar area, by Sri Lankan artists such as Anoli Perera, Pradeep Chandrasiri, Mahen Perera, Pala Pothipitya, Koralegedara Pushpa Kumara, and more.



THE FOOD

'1864 Limited Edition' features an incredible, contemporary European/French menu that Chef Bjorn Van de Horst and his team have curated that guarantees a fine dining experience that, while being aesthetically pleasing, is generous and authentic, striking a perfect balance between tradition and technique. Diners can select their dishes off their a la carte menu or opt for one of their two tasting menus. We opted for the former.

The Appetizer - 'Ravioles' of Beef and Foie Gras (LKR 7,200)

If you love your beef, you're in for a treat! This was a hearty portion of ravioli stuffed generously with melt-in-your-mouth beef, served in a beautifully savoury onion consommé, with a pop of earthy freshness from the parsley pesto. Just when you thought it couldn't get any better, you're greeted with a decadent richness from the cubes of foie gras in the consommé. Overall, a dish that will definitely leave your taste buds singing!

The Main Course - Lamb Shank (LKR 9,800)

Another one for the meat lovers! A succulent lamb shank sitting on a bed of saffron risotto and red wine jus, topped with a basil gremolata and lemon confit. The lamb shank was cooked to perfection, with the meat falling off the bone. The risotto plays an incredible

supporting role, letting the lamb sing whilst giving you a subtle taste of saffron. The basil gremolata and lemon confit add freshness and acidity that help balance the bold and rich flavours of the lamb and jus.

The Dessert - Spiced Port and Apple Crumble (LKR 4,000)

This was definitely the most enticing of the three dishes we tried; an apple crumble topped with a quenelle of cinnamon-jaggery ice cream, all covered in a golden dome of caramelised angel hair. The crumble comes with a shot of Ceylon-tea infused arrack and a piece of kithul jaggery, which we mixed and poured over the dome for a sweet, spicy kick. This modern, inventive take on the humble apple crumble is a celebration of flavours AND textures!



THE SIGNATURE COCKTAILS

The bar at '1864 Limited Edition' has a range of exclusive signature cocktails. While most of them take advantage of the bold flavours of their extensive collection of whiskeys, there's something that suits everyone's palates. Based on the house's recommendations, we tried their two most popular cocktails.

Brooklyn

A concoction of sweet vermouth, Luxardo and a dry Canadian whiskey garnished with a maraschino cherry, this cocktail is incredibly smooth and faintly sweet thanks to the vermouth and cherry liqueur.

Kamikaze

Not to be confused with the shooter of the same name, this Kamikaze is a vodka-based cocktail that features Cointreau, lime juice and their homemade rose essence, garnished with a dried rose petal. It was a subtle, yet delightful affair. Not at all sweet thanks to the zest of the lime, which was rounded off by the rose essence that also gave it an incredible aroma.

IN CONCLUSION...

With its mouth-watering food and tantalising cocktails, all served in a space that truly lives up to its name, '1864 Limited Edition' fills a void in the Colombo restaurant scene that we didn't know we had!

If you're looking for a unique dining experience, look no further than '1864 Limited Edition'. Regardless of whether you're there to have a quiet evening with a signature cocktail, impress a date with a fantastic meal, or throw a private soiree at the Animal House with a uniquely curated menu, you can rest assured that an evening here will leave you inspired, fulfilled, in awe and wanting more!





Interview with Mr. Sanjaya Bandara, President of CA Sri Lanka

The 57th Annual Report Awards (ARA) presented by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka (CA Sri Lanka) made its rebranded debut as the "TAGS Awards" this December 2022. Since its inception in 1964, the competition has encouraged and rewarded corporates for promoting transparency, accountability, governance and sustainability through financial and non-financial reporting. This time around CA Sri Lanka flipped over a new chapter by shifting the focus of the Awards to be more inclusive of a broader base of stakeholders, such as the general public and investors. Along with it, the popularly known Annual Report Awards (ARA) came to be known as the (TAGS) Awards, which stands for 'Transparency, Accountability, Governance and Sustainability'.

The President of CA Sri Lanka, Sanjaya Bandara sat down with Pulse to talk about how the TAGS Awards sets the bar for ethical corporate governance across Sri Lanka.

Why is this a remarkable event for CA Sri Lanka considering it is over 60 years of existence?

In a time of increased corruption and lack of accountability, both transparency and accountability are essential to building a strong community and a successful nation.

The ARA Competition is recognised as a prestigious competition spanning a legacy of over half a century. But in an ever-evolving context, we need to understand that no matter how popular a competition is, it is critical that we adapt with time to remain relevant. This is why a decision was taken to reconceptualise the ARA to TAGS Awards.

The primary reason is that as much as financial reporting has been imperative over the years,

FROM ARA TO TAGS THE TRANSFORMATION

more stakeholders have also started to pay special focus to non-financial reporting. Despite the popularity of this competition, the truth is, with new demands and expectations, we must evolve and adapt. And with our revamped concept, we hope to encourage increased and enhanced participation with many more companies vying for the TAGS honours in the future.

What sort of transformation ensued this year and why did such take place?

The ARA Competition was often known as a prestigious corporate-level competition rewarding financial reporting and regulatory compliance, but in today's significance of integrated reporting and with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) also taking a front seat, we understood the need to make room for not just corporates, but also the requirements of other vital stakeholders including investors and the public. As such, while financial reporting and regulatory compliance continued to enjoy a key focus, an equally important focus was also granted to non-financial reporting through the TAGS Awards.

From this year onwards, CA Sri Lanka expends all-around focus on the core principles of transparency, accountability, governance and sustainability through the competition. To keep up with the continuing changes in the business and corporate eco-system, apart from the customary categories for which we awarded companies, CA Sri Lanka also introduced new award categories to its lineup, where companies were honoured for digital and business transformation as well as sustainability.

The competition is known for its stringent evolution process adopted to honour companies on a merit basis for promoting the core requirements of the competition. Therefore, in our continuing efforts to ensure that the competition remains relevant, we also revamped the evaluation process with the involvement of foreign representatives in the final panel of judges to ensure the continued independence of this prestigious competition's evaluation process.

What kind of benefit will this lead to the country and the society, given the current economic revival of the country?

Today, our nation is at crossroads, due to shortsighted popularity-based decisions. As a professional body, and in our dual standing as

both the National Body of Accountants and the sole authority to promulgate accounting and auditing standards in the country, it is critical that we continue to play a key role in helping strengthen confidence among investors so that they would be keen in investing in Sri Lanka.

In such a scenario, organisations including multinationals, conglomerates and even small and medium-sized businesses can vitally contribute by doing all they can to ensure that transparency and accountability are aligned with the TAGS standards.

This ongoing crisis cannot be solved by a single body. So, I'm certain that the TAGS Awards can be considered an imperative platform to amp investor-confidence, both local and foreign, and further the expansion of the capital market in Sri Lanka.

What is CA Sri Lanka's key message to organisations which wish to join TAGS and the competition's future outlook?

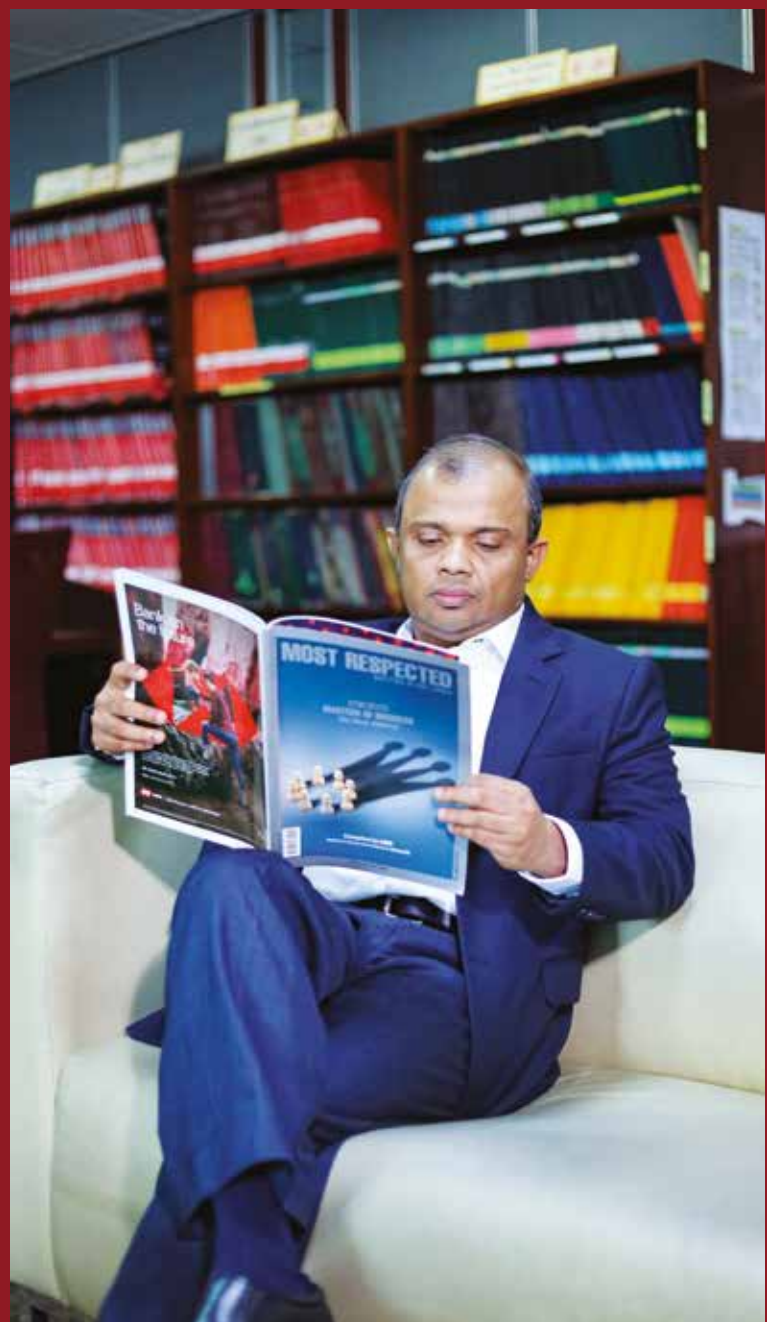
When a company is honoured at the TAGS it does not only mean that the company is on the right path, but it is also a testimony to the fact that the companies are truly committed to ensuring the core principles in today's extremely challenging environment. That alone, is excellent reason to be part of this prestigious competition which holds a legacy of nearly 60 years.

CA Sri Lanka takes immense pride in its standing as a world-class professional body, and we command immense respect across the accounting arena including at a regional and international level.

We understand the need to continuously

monitor the timely changes in the market and upgrade the evaluation criteria according to the latest changes so that Sri Lankan companies are second to none at a global level. The future is unpredictable but as a professional body, we must make every effort necessary to ensure that we are future-ready.

The transformation of the TAGS Awards from the more traditional ARA competition is also part of our larger commitment to ensure we're not just asking companies to change, but we're setting an example by changing ourselves by adapting and evolving, and encouraging the companies to change with us.





THE EMBASSY BY THE SEA

Along the coast of Colombo's iridescent Indian Ocean stands the newly constructed Embassy of the United States of America (U.S.A.). Unveiled on 28 October 2022, this project was overlooked by the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) and serves as the upholder of all diplomatic relations between the U.S.A. and Sri Lanka, which has a history of nearly 75 years.



By Pahani Fernando

The opening also saw the participation of President Ranil Wickremesinghe, U.S. Department of State Under Secretary for Management, John Bass and Managing Director for Operations at OBO, Chelsea Bakken alongside U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Julie Chung. This building symbolises and reinforces the long-standing commitment and friendship between the two nations and the liberal democratic values they share. Another cornerstone for the construction of the embassy was sustainability and environmental conservation.

Read on to dive into the nitty gritty of this most significant building.

While the newly renovated embassy resides on the same site as the previous embassy, it was expanded to include an adjacent property. Intriguingly, the design team was based in America, with ZGF Architects as the lead architect, Caddell Construction Company as the design/build contractor, and Integrus Architecture as the architect of record. The project which began in 2016, transformed the existing 5.6-acre site into a space that's not only professional, but also truly embodies an



institution that stands for the strengthening of bilateral ties between countries. It was also designed and built to promote the Sri Lankan economy. Did you know that this project alone has granted employment to approximately 1800 U.S., Sri Lankan, and third-country nationals through construction and injected USD 90 million into the local economy? Some of the construction materials are domestically sourced and natural, which promotes local manufacturers during these difficult times. It also includes various design elements and styles that pay homage to Sri Lankan culture, making this institution one that stands for continuing cultural inclusion and integration. In a nutshell, these features make this institution the quintessential model for newer construction projects that should factor sustainability into their design models.

The new and improved structure also has a comprehensive design plan which incorporates rigorous climate protection methods. This shows the embassy's stewardship and resilience towards entering a more sustainable and eco-conscious future, through design and infrastructure. The use of regionally available materials that can withstand tropical weather conditions, a Solar Photovoltaic Array (PV) system that offsets roughly 40% of annual energy use, and an advanced stormwater management system,



are some of the key sustainable investments in this project. All of this also permitted Sri Lanka's U.S. Embassy to attain a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) certification, which is a global green building rating system providing a framework for highly efficient, sustainable and cost-effective green buildings. The extraordinary features of the embassy don't stop there, because the interior of the building is also significant for cultural reasons.

The embassy features a mosaic of culturally significant arts and crafts to create a sense of

affinity and kinship between American and Sri Lankan cultures. This includes a curated collection of art in the form of paintings, photography, sculptures and textiles. There are also site-specific commissions of birds of Sri Lanka and an intricate wall sculpture of Sri Lankan atolls and coral biodiversity signifying the oceans. This again reinforces the holistic commitment of the American Embassy to strengthen diplomatic as well as cultural ties with Sri Lanka.



Grand Opening of Zden

- For a Gracious Living

Meet your go-to stop for home shopping and gracious living! Zden, is a modern gift shop that recently launched its showroom at No. 36, Melbourne Avenue, Colombo 04, offering a wide range of unique and quality home and lifestyle products perfect for every home! Take a look at their opening day!





“A TRIP TO THE MOTHERLAND IS LONG OVERDUE FOR ME”

Sri Lankan-born musician Jay Princece talks Sri Lanka, U.S., and creating music

For Sri Lankan-born musician currently residing in San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles – Jay Princece – the song that got him a lot of social media attention in his motherland was in fact one that he was apprehensive about making. “At first, I was hesitant because I felt like people were going to judge me and assume that I was doing this song for clout,” the 33-year-old lyricist told Pulse. Being oceans away, Princece wanted to contribute food or money to his country of birth but after discussions with his marketing team in Sri Lanka, he decided that the best way to make an impact would be to draw attention to the deep-rooted issues underlying the country’s crisis. So despite his reservations, the rap artiste released ‘Power to the People’ in April of 2022, because he knew deep down that his intentions were pure.

By Jennifer Anandanayagam

The song, which featured the World Is One News (WION) report on Sri Lanka’s economic crisis, garnered 160,000 views in one day. “The inspiration behind this song was the people’s struggle,” shared Princece. “I know of so many people that were struggling to eat, pay their bills, and find jobs... I decided this was my form of protest,” he detailed. The passionate Princece whose love for rap blossomed when he settled in the U.S., did not expect the tune to reach the heights it did, but he is grateful it did. “We needed to spread the message to the world of the injustice that was being done to our country.”

HIS ORIGIN STORY: HIS MOTHER IS HIS ROLE MODEL

Born in Sri Lanka to Visaka and Upali Jayasekera whom he describes as “humble” and “amazing individuals”, the younger Princece attended Nalanda College till fifth grade, before his family relocated to the States when his dad won the Green Card lottery. The memories of his years in

the island nation are something he cherishes despite them being from many years ago. The family moved from Staten Island, New York to Englewood, New Jersey, a place where Princce recalls putting down roots, and also where he was introduced to the genres of hip hop and rap. But it wasn't long before the young boy had to move again and the family settled in Santa Maria, California where he attended high school. "During this time was when I started rapping and growing my love for music," he shared. After graduation, the aspiring musician moved to Southern California and fell in love with San Fernando Valley, L.A. where he's now lived for over a decade.

As a child, Princce grew up listening to the tunes of the baila band Gypsies (influenced by his dad), before he was introduced to rap and hip hop by his friends. His father passed away when he was a teenager and his mom had to take on the roles of both parents while raising him and his sister. "Ammi always led by example," he said, adding that her strength reminded him that there are no shortcuts in life. "... you have to put in the work to get the results you desire."

HIS MUSICAL PATH WAS AN ECLECTIC ONE

The musician erupted onto the hip-hop scene when he was featured on a track titled 'Aaah අඹර' by rapper and producer Costa in 2020. Since then, the talented lyricist has gone on to release several tunes. Princce believes that his best piece of work is his most recent album titled 'Heavy is the Head That Wears the Crown'. "The inspiration behind the title was more of the message. I believe that leaders should understand the responsibilities and sacrifices that come with being a leader. Those who do not understand will only see the upsides of things," he explained.

Being an independent artsite like himself comes with its own sets of challenges, like having to be his own investor, director, producer, editor, and marketer. "You have to find the right network of people and put yourself in the correct places to succeed," he shared. Being organised and being able to multitask are also traits the rapper has honed over the years in order to succeed. That being said, Princce does have a small group of people who support his projects whom he's deeply grateful for.

Apart from the freedom that comes with working for himself, the musician loves connecting with people he's never met through

his passion – both fans and other talented people in the industry. He's particularly happy he's met and worked with Juda from Terminal 16 Recording Studios. "He is someone who's been with me since day one."

I asked him if he'd ever consider leaving L.A. and returning to Sri Lanka, to which he said he'd love to spend six months to a year on the island. He's eager to reconnect to his roots and spend more time with his extended family, a rarity given that he's so far away. "The last time I was in Sri Lanka was about 12 years ago, so a trip to the motherland is long overdue for me."

OVERCOMING TRIALS: THE DICHOTOMY OF JUDGEMENT AND FREEDOM

Living in the U.S. has not been without trying times for the musician. Adapting to western culture and making friends were things he

"At first, I was hesitant because I felt like people were going to judge me and assume that I was doing this song for clout"

found difficult at first, especially since his family moved around a lot. The time following 9/11 was particularly challenging too. "Similar to a lot of the other South Asian kids, we were bullied and labelled as 'terrorists'," he shared. Princce endured the judgement on his skin colour with patience. "It was tough, but what doesn't kill you will make you stronger," said the persevering soul who clearly seems to have learned the strength of character from his mother.

"I'm at a way better place in regards to understanding myself, but I'm grateful for the times I've gone through because, without it, I wouldn't be who I am today." Despite its dark traits, what he loves about the society he's chosen to call home is the freedom it offers him to be who he wants to be and express himself the way he wants to, a commodity even more important for a creative like himself. "Yes there was judgement when I was growing up but I have learned to push that aside and to live my life." The food (especially tacos) doesn't hurt either.

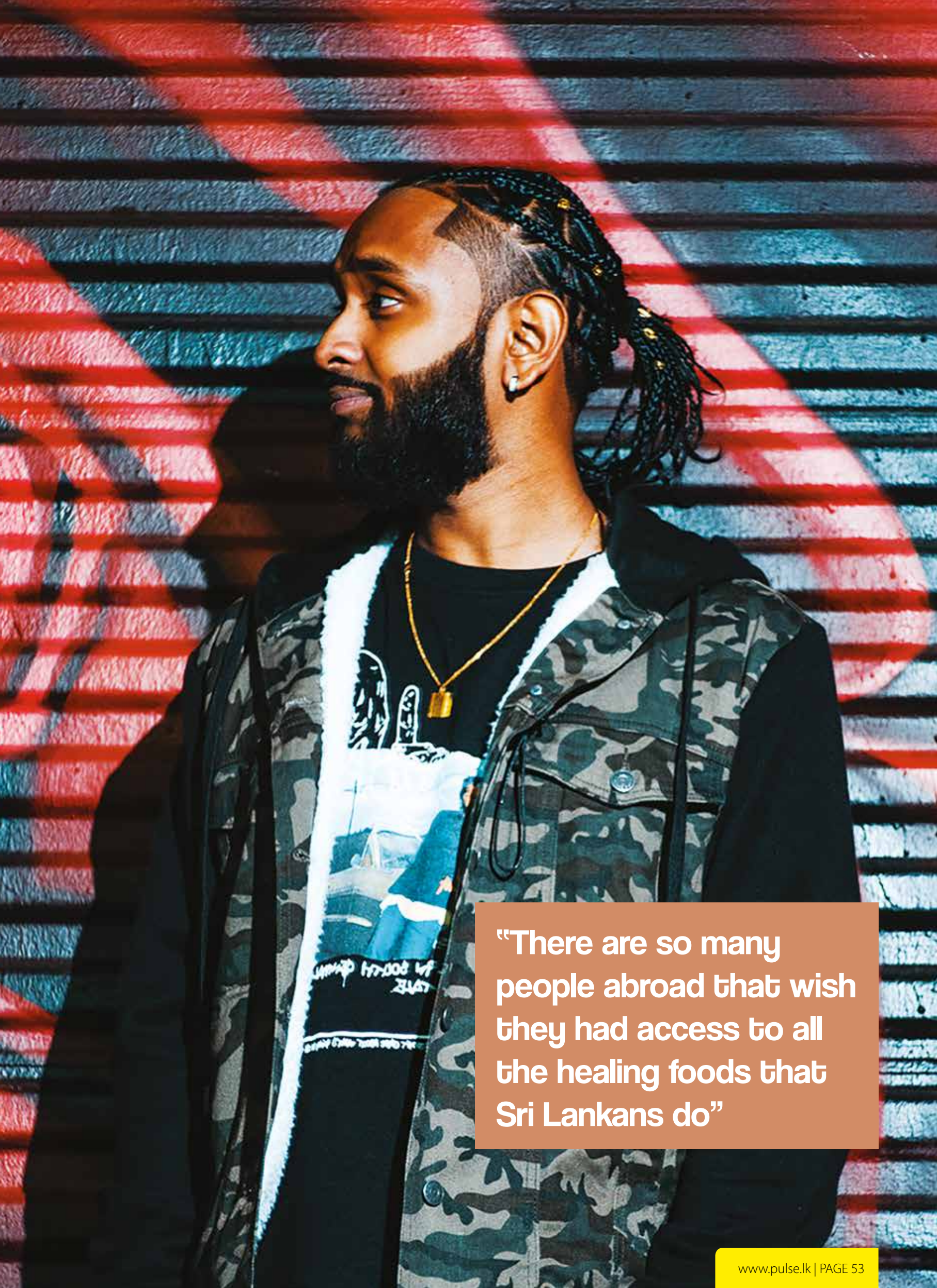
AN UNDERVALUED HOME COUNTRY: SRI LANKA

As for his country of origin, Princce has fond words for its food, beaches, and culture. The Sri Lankan way of life is something that's understated according to him. "There are so many people abroad that wish they had access to all the healing foods that Sri Lankans do. Even our Ayurvedic lifestyle is something that so many people study while living in other countries because the basic principles of it are beneficial," he said.

He doesn't, however, like the male-dominant aspects of Sri Lankan culture. While he does respect that things are slowly changing, he is unappreciative of how women have to go that extra mile just to be taken seriously.

The young musician is working on an album he's really excited about because it's a collaborative project with a Sri Lankan-Australian artiste called Markia, whom he also fondly refers to as a brother he's found through music. "I don't think there's been an album that has been released on the island in the calibre of this project. It features so many amazing talents from all around the world – artistes you may not even know about but you will soon. This album is bridging the gap of hip hop music in Sri Lanka."

Parting words for his country of birth? Princce responded kindly, praising the island's people known the world over for their kindness and hospitality. "Whenever I meet someone that has been to Sri Lanka, they always talk about how the people are one of their favourites compared to other places that they have travelled to," he shared, adding that he hopes this gift within its people would be used to build the country up from where it is today.

A man with a beard and dreadlocks, wearing a camouflage jacket, is shown in profile against a background of red and blue horizontal stripes. He is looking to the left. The image has a high-contrast, artistic feel with strong shadows.

“There are so many people abroad that wish they had access to all the healing foods that Sri Lankans do”

Thirty-year-old Sandarangi Anita Perera is happiest when she's dancing. No one would doubt this if they scrolled through her social media profiles and witnessed her in action. The sense of reckless abandon curated and delivered with the finesse that only committed dancers can pull off is evident in each of her pieces. Perera, who is a professional choreographer with her own dance academy – Vibe Dance Academy, is grateful that she gets to live out her passion every day.

By Jennifer Anandanayagam

Speaking with Pulse, she recalls how it all began for her. She was nine and was enrolled in her first dance class which happened to be Kandyan dancing. "I don't really think I understood back then how much I actually loved dance but even then, I used to pick dance class over anything else. It was the highlight of my week," she added. After pursuing the traditional Sri Lankan dance method native to the Central Hills, a teenage Perera was exposed to hip hop at the age of 16, when she took her first class in the genre at The Deanna School of Dancing (DSD) under the guidance of Natasha Jayasuriya. It was love at first sight. The subsequent eight years would be dedicated to learning all she could from the academy. "During this time, I also had the opportunity to work at DSD as an assistant/substitute teacher, which led to my passion for teaching dance," she explained.

Perera thinks that if not for Jayasuriya, she would have never seen dance as a viable career option. We sat down with this passionate soul to find out more. Here are some excerpts from our chat.

Q: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

A: My immediate family consists of my parents Lakshman and Prianthi Perera, my older brother Gayan Perera, and my husband Manjula Mirihana. My husband is an entrepreneur and a brilliant dancer and a videographer. I have to say they have been my biggest supporters and pillars of strength.

I schooled at Holy Family Convent, Bambalapitiya, and was at Sri Lanka College of Journalism and ICBT for my tertiary education. I have a diploma in journalism and an HND in business management.

While in school, I was convinced I wanted to be a journalist. It was close to my mid-twenties when I realised that dance was, in fact, my true passion and calling. In addition to the eight years I trained with Natasha Jayasuriya, I also trained for two years in contemporary dance at a pre-professional level under Umeshi Rajeendra at Mesh Ground formerly known as Mesh Academy of Dance.

Over the years, I've also taken a number of dance classes/workshops under international instructors, in 2019 trained full-time for three months at The Space Dance and Arts Centre in Melbourne Australia, and took up an online training programme offered by The LAB Dance Studio in LA California for three months in 2021.

Thanks to these training sessions, I've had the opportunity to dabble in jazz, ballet, dancehall, afro, house, and Litefeet while remaining heavily focused on commercial and hip hop. I've also engaged in a great deal of self-exploration, self-learning, and self-teaching that have helped me create my current style of movement/commercial choreography.

Q: Tell us about Vibe Dance Academy. How did that come about?

A: A derivative of the word "vibration" and a synonym to "energy", the name VIBE represents the extraordinary energy each of us carries within us and exchanges with each other when forming human connections. Especially the connection we form when moving together while sharing the divine, unifying, and uplifting energy found in dance.

Rooted in artistry, originality, and quality, VIBE is the primary brand, under which exist Vibe Dance Academy, The Vibe Tribe, and Vibe Productions.

Vibe Dance Academy (VDA) – the heart of the venture – focuses on dance education and training of future professionals in the industry and also offers casual training for dance enthusiasts and hobbyists. The academy's priority is to provide quality dance training and instil the right mindset in its students so as to prepare them physically and mentally for the nature and demands of the industry while immersing in the joy of movement. VDA currently has five skilled and experienced instructors offering classes in commercial, hip hop, heels, Kandyan, and Bharatanatyam. Our classes are open to dancers of all levels and ages.

The Vibe Tribe, the official dance crew of Vibe Dance Academy represents the 'dance company' component of the brand. It comprises a group of skilled dancers who have been handpicked based on passion, skill, and work ethic. These individuals are hired as professional dance artistes for paid commercial/industry work.

“
STAY
ROOTED
IN THE “WHY””

**In conversation
with professional
dancer and
choreographer
Sandarangi
Perera**

Vibe Productions, still in an infant phase, is a video production venture that focuses on creating artistic visual content.

When I first started VIBE, it was just myself teaching casual classes and training the crew. Over the years, it has snowballed into something that allows me to extend a helping hand to other dancers who want to turn their passion for dance into a practical and fulfilling career.

Q: Do you have a creative process when it comes to choreography?

A: My creative process generally begins with feeling inspired by a piece of music. I then listen to it repeatedly and dissect it. The different layers of the song – the lyrics, the vocals, the beats, and the various instruments. Thereafter, I create a rough draft mentally, physically flesh it out, and give the movement intention. Depending on how creative or inspired I'm feeling, creating the actual choreography can take anywhere between two hours to two days.

On days when I do feel stuck, I like to take a step back and research other choreographic works of the same or similar music to study how other artistes interpret the music. Which elements of the song did they choose to focus on? What's their musicality? What are the different textures of movement they use? What do I like about the piece, and what would I change? This usually helps me get fresh perspective and inspiration that I can then pour into what I create.

Q: Do fitness and dance go together in your opinion? How important is it to maintain the health of your body as a dancer/choreographer?

A: Absolutely. Fitness is of prime importance to a dancer. Something I always tell my students is "similar to how a musician needs to tune their instrument, a dancer needs to tune their body because for us, our bodies are our instruments". We are a combination of artistes and athletes. What we create with our bodies requires a great deal of strength, stamina, muscle endurance, coordination, flexibility, and agility – all things we need to hone through training. Not only will continuously pushing our physical fitness make us better dancers because it directly correlates with expanding our skill set and movement vocabulary but more importantly, it ensures that we are able to minimise or hopefully eliminate the chance of injury that could affect our careers.

However, I must also add here that fitness does not mean "looking a certain way". It's about feeling healthy in your body and being able to skillfully execute the movement that is required of you as a dancer.



Q: What's the most challenging thing about doing what you do?

A: Trying to convince non-dancers in the arts and entertainment industry to see the value of dance artistes. More often than not, when doing industry work, dancers are seen as props or simply as "people doing steps in the background". Dance artistes have so much more to offer than that and what we do is so much more complex than that. So one of the biggest challenges has been to convince people to see and respect what we actually bring to the table and to fairly compensate us for it.

It's also been a challenge to rebel against what brown culture has indoctrinated in us about what a "woman should or should not be". Women shouldn't talk like that, walk like that, sit like that/act like that, dress like that, dance like that, etc. The list is endless and exhausting. We are instantly labelled as "not worthy of respect" whenever we go against those norms. Over the last few years, I've been testing and pushing those boundaries and it's brought a number of different challenges along with it. However, it has also been incredibly empowering to own my femininity and what that means to me while also creating a safe, judgement-free space for others to do the same.

Q: Advice to anyone looking to make choreography and/or dancing a profession.

A: Dance most definitely is a viable career option provided you are willing to do the work. The dance industry is global and offers numerous avenues so the opportunities are infinite.

However, as blissful as it is and as glamorous as it may seem, training to be a professional dance artiste is still hard work. It entails countless hours of life-long learning, practising, exploring, and literal blood, sweat, and tears but it is also rewarding beyond measure if you are truly passionate about it. Despite what it demands of you, it is an extremely fun job, no doubt!

To succeed as a professional dancer/choreographer, there are no shortcuts so you must be patient and trust the process and your journey. You cannot compare your timeline to anyone else's. Stay committed, put in the hours and the work, learn to push yourself in every aspect of your craft, invest in your training, train consistently, practise self-discipline, stay hungry, never stop learning no matter how good you get, be open to constructive criticism, don't strive for perfection instead strive for progress, venture out of your comfort zone when necessary (especially when learning), and above all believe in yourself and never let self-doubt hold you back from taking a chance or pushing yourself out into an opportunity.

Stay rooted in WHY you dance. For me personally, it's because I love it and it makes me happy. Your "why" will guide you through your career and it will get you through the tough days. As much as we love to dance, when you choose to pursue it on a professional level, there are bound to be days when you feel physically, mentally, and creatively drained. Remembering your "why" will keep you grounded and help you recentre yourself.

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EthicalX

Climate & Innovation Hub

Accelerating ethical,
sustainable, and
climate-friendly
entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurs, start-ups, and innovative businesses are key to a dynamic and growing economy. They offer income, employment opportunities, goods, services, and technologies to the market and can act as catalysts for transformative change.

In the face of complex global challenges, societies and economies must find effective and innovative solutions to thrive in a changing environment. Enhancing entrepreneurship presents a solution pathway that can contribute to addressing the climate crisis, the need for sustainable development, and the empowerment of vulnerable communities and groups. In particular, climate-friendly, sustainable, ethical, and resilient



SLYCAN Trust sharing experiences and lessons learned from EthicalX at the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

entrepreneurship can play a critical role in connecting economic recovery with climate action, ecosystem and animal protection, and social responsibility.

Supporting climate-friendly ethical entrepreneurship

To strengthen climate entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka and across developing countries in the world, as well as forge partnerships between Global South and Global North for climate innovation and entrepreneurship enhancement, SLYCAN Trust has launched the EthicalX programme. The EthicalX: Climate & Innovation Hub, which was initiated in Sri Lanka with the partnership of multiple governments and other stakeholders, has expanded today to multiple regions. It works on supporting existing entrepreneurial ecosystems as well as enabling the environment through policy and planning-related interventions.

EthicalX aims to mainstream clean, green, and responsible business practices into entrepreneurship and facilitate the strategic alignment of business goals with the goals of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals, and other related processes.

"Our work under EthicalX provides capacity-building and technical support

for entrepreneurs who are focused on building enterprises that are ethical, sustainable, and climate-friendly, as well as for entities such as existing enterprises and accelerators to convert their processes to more climate-friendly ones," explains SLYCAN Trust's Executive Director and Founder of EthicalX Vositha Wijenayake.

"In addition to the existing enterprises that seek to shift to climate-friendly practices, we have a special focus on youth, women, and communities groups most vulnerable to climate change. We also work through partnerships to ensure that our EthicalX: Climate & Innovation Hubs provide support to stakeholders seeking to create transformative change for long-term resilience through entrepreneurship," she added.

Shifting risks to resilience

EthicalX focuses on addressing risks and vulnerabilities that threaten resilience and prosperity at a local, national, and global level. This work takes place through engagement and capacity-building processes related to skill development for effective entrepreneurship.

"EthicalX focuses on thematic cells and cohorts which provide the opportunity for different individuals and entities to engage through concrete activities as well as commitments. Through continued engagement with our cohort and thematic cells, we strengthen key aspects of entrepreneurship, including product development, the implementation of sustainable and climate-friendly practices, certification and accreditation, and identifying trade and business opportunities," explained Wijenayake.

"In Sri Lanka, EthicalX focuses on four key sectors which are climate vulnerable but also have significant potential for entrepreneurship. We are presently working in the areas of fashion, food systems, tourism, and waste management at both a national and local level. We consider this a learning process, where we learn every day from our cohort members and contribute to their journey as best suited. We are extremely proud to see the brands we work with achieve success through



Vositha Wijenayake - Founder, EthicalX

a path that focuses on ethical practices and reduces harm to the planet," she added.

Championing change

Ethical entrepreneurship could contribute to creating positive change in the world and provide avenues for sustainable development. Measures targeting economic development focused on ensuring environmental conservation while generating pathways for long-term resilience-building have the potential for supporting sustainable growth and can be replicated globally.

While EthicalX was initiated in Sri Lanka, its central focus on values that are integral for achieving climate resilience and sustainable development has allowed the programme to adapt to the specific needs of different areas, communities, and stakeholders. This includes actions that are targeting local-level policy and planning processes as well as national-level knowledge-sharing platforms which provide support for specific entrepreneurial needs.

Climate entrepreneurs can be agents of change who address the urgent challenges of the climate crisis, environmental degradation, and the need for sustainable development. Initiatives such as EthicalX can empower vulnerable groups, scale up entrepreneurship on a local and national level, create a link to international processes, and facilitate Sri Lanka's entrepreneurs to reach the global market through value-based approaches and practices.



Be it a father-son duo, siblings or colleagues, there is always a sense of friendship associated with any kind of relationship.

In this segment, we tackle the ins and outs of close-knit relationships and test the limits of The Friendship Meter.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a grey long-sleeved top and a patterned skirt, stands with her hands near her face. She is surrounded by white line-art angel wings and a glowing pink halo above her head.

The Friendship Meter

With

Janik
and
Aseka



Their epic proposal was the talk of the town and they've been one of Sri Lanka's sweethearts for quite some time now. Janik Jayasuriya and Aseka Wijewardena are one of those couples who look like they've literally stepped out of a fairytale.

On one of the coldest days in Colombo this year, we were able to catch up with them amidst work meetings and practices for 'Ridee Rayak'. It was a lively chat that involved catching up on what they've been up to. The duo shared some stories about how the past two years have been for them.



By Harith Wirasinha

Janik is the Managing Director of Celeste Daily, a sustainable convenience store based in Colombo. Aseka is a classical dancer and the granddaughter of dancer S. Panibharatha.

We've been dying to know, how did you meet?

Janik: We were introduced to each other by a really close family friend. I was talking to her

one day and she wanted to introduce me to this girl who was from a nice family and would complement me well, and that's how it all started. At first, I didn't know much about her and I did some sleuthing and came across an interview she did with Kumar de Silva on Pulse. That was honestly my first impression of her. I actually had a date the day I got introduced to Aseka, but none of those worked out. From that first interview I saw of Aseka, it was clear

that she was special and I could see myself settling down with her.

Aseka: The weird thing was that we've been moving in the same social circles for years and we didn't really know each other. We have a bunch of mutual friends and have been to the same weddings and events a lot of times but we hadn't really spoken to each other. The first day we started texting, he gave me a call and at the time, I was not about that. We took things slow for some time and the feelings just blossomed. He was so easy to talk to and we had a lot in common. Six months after being introduced, we started dating.

Both of you come from pretty prominent families with a big legacy. What was it like having the families blend together?

Aseka: My family is Buddhist and they're very strong in their beliefs so my biggest fear was that they wouldn't like a Catholic boy. I'm very close to my parents so that mattered a lot to me. My parents loved Janik's grandfather so we had that going from the very beginning. Although our fathers didn't seem to have anything in common with each other, coming from the arts and business circles, they got really close really fast and to this day that's something I'm thankful for.

Janik: My parents had a huge regard for Aseka's family, especially her father and they said that if the daughter was anything close to the father, I would have chosen an amazing partner. My dad, however, was a bit reluctant to get too close to Aseka because he'd gotten attached to some of my brother's girlfriends in the past and during their breakups, he got hurt. He didn't want to go through the whole issue of losing contact with another daughter. He was a bit cold at first but Aseka was able to win him over. On the other hand, my mom's side of the family was excited from day one.

There's no denying that you live a very public and hectic life. What do you like to do when you have some time for yourselves?

Aseka: We love spending a quiet evening with Netflix and takeout. Don't get me wrong, we love being around people but there are days when we just need to stay indoors and do our own thing. We also travel quite a lot and that's something that helps us recharge. I love the beach and Janik loves the mountains so our travelling can get quite extensive.

Janik: Aseka and I have very similar wavelengths. We both love to socialise but when we're done, we just want to walk away from everyone. We love food so depending on the time we have and our energy levels, we tend to go out for dinner or even just stay in. We have a few places around Colombo that we love going to and although we're not the most adventurous when it comes to food, we enjoy it a lot.

Who is the more adventurous out of the two of you?

Janik: Honestly speaking, Aseka is the more daring of the two of us. If she wants something, she will get it done no matter what. Especially when it comes to dancing, she can sacrifice anything to achieve what she wants. Even with a herniated disc post-operation, she still dances like she always used to and somehow finds a way to deal with all the challenges that comes with it.

Aseka: Janik is the free spirit in the relationship and even though we're adventurous to some extent together, we've done a lot of things that we might not have done by ourselves.

What are your plans for this holiday season?

Aseka: 'Ridee Rayak' has been taking up a lot of my time for the past few weeks and that will continue till the end of the month. I'm also extremely excited about Christmas and this is my first Christmas where I'm part of a family that celebrates it so I'm planning to get the most out of it.

Janik: It's been one heck of a year and I'm looking forward to taking a few weeks off to go on holiday after spending time with the family for Christmas. We're trying to get some travelling done before we start adding members to the family, so that's where my planning is going this season.

Location: 7 Degrees Restaurants



1. What's my favourite colour ?
Pink

2. What do I love the most out of these 3, Rugby
Celeste or You?
Celeste

3. How many relationships have I had?
Too many to mention! I just think I put myself in trouble, lol

4. Who is my best friend? Sudarshana, Danu & Akarsh.
Danu

5. What is my favourite position?
No. 8

6. What would I typically do on a
Friday night if you weren't at
home?
I'd have all my friends
over

1. What's
the one thing
that I love to do the
most apart from dancing?
Sleeping

2. Name 5 of my school friends?
Savindri, Mitali, Radhini, Anjalika and Kanji

3. My favourite place in the world?
Disney land

4. If I can bring someone famous back to life, who would
it be?
Micheal Jackson

5. What's my favourite chocolate?
It's a Belgian chocolate but I don't know how to
pronounce it

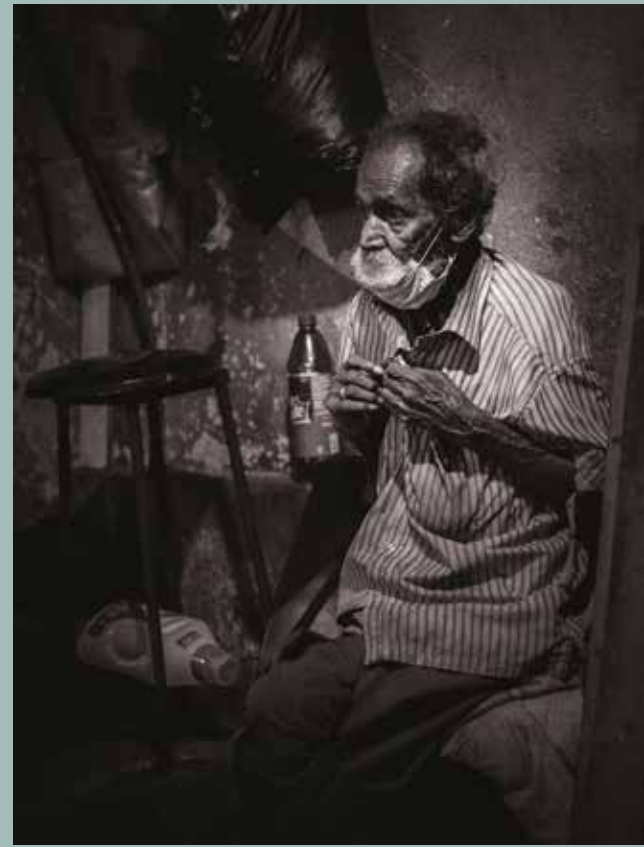
6. What made me stay up till really
late after I got married?
Janik's snoring! So loud!

How Well? Do You? Know Me

In this segment, we bring together a famous duo to interview each other in a round of intimate, never-asked-before questions that brings out the sides to your favourite persona you've never seen before.



Scan the QR code to watch
the full video



**"CHERISH THE
LITTLE THINGS
IN LIFE"**

**IN CONVERSATION
WITH FAZ MARKAR**





Fazmi 'Faz' Markar is a photographer, cinematographer and marketing consultant who has been making big moves in the content creation industry. This week, Pulse managed to grab hold of this busy all-rounder for a quick chat about his story and upcoming projects.

By Aakil Riyaz

1. Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

My name is Fazmi Markar, and I'm a self-taught photographer and content creator. My niche

is a mix of content creation and marketing consultation. I am also the founder of Lean Start Digital – a digital media company where we focus on various forms of content creation.

2. What were your aspirations that led you to where you are today?

I've had a fascination towards photography since my childhood. As far back as when we had film reels and had to go to studios to develop film reels, something kept bringing me back to this passion for photography over the years. Fortunately, thanks to my very supportive girlfriend, family and friends, I've managed to create a humble career since the pandemic. Something that has greatly helped me apart from them is learning marketing, and this has definitely enabled me to raise the standards and find a niche in the market.

3. How has the journey been so far, since the pandemic and the ongoing situation in the country?

To be honest, this was not my career before the pandemic hit, but I had the complete

manoeuvrability of steering with the pandemic and adjusting accordingly. I had planned my intended pathway to accommodate the situation then and it was every bit as enjoyable as I had imagined it to be. Since the beginning, I have been very careful with choosing my clients and the projects I dedicate myself to. I'm also very disciplined when it comes to work. I've gotten some pretty great feedback from friends and clients alike. Then again, something is always enjoyable when it is what you're genuinely passionate about, right? As of now, I'm working on a variety of corporate projects with entities both in and out of Sri Lanka, but in relation to my personal projects, they are still in their infant stages of production.

4. Apart from what has gotten you here, let us direct the spotlight to your tools of the trade. What gear and equipment do you use for your projects?

Honestly, I kickstarted my journey with a USD 200 Xiaomi Poco F1. This happened when I was taking pictures for an employer, as I was handling their digital marketing. Things got pretty serious as I began to delve deeper into the world of photography. Fortunately, with timely assistance from family, I managed to grab my hands on a used Sony A73. I started working on gigs from there and since then



I've upgraded to a Sony A74. This was mostly because I wanted to have a certain level of versatility in my projects and I also wanted to give my clients high-quality content. As for anything else, I simply rent them out for certain projects. Something I've grown to believe in is that equipment is always a source of comfort to a creator, but the creation process lies solely on the creator. In short, it's nothing more than a tool.

5. Now that we've spoken about your gear, would you mind giving us a glimpse into your workflow and post-production process?

Well, this is something I really pride myself on, be it personal projects or my clients. I have a meticulous system in place to help me manage the process. It took me months to research and figure out the process. My first rule is that I always shoot raw. I shoot with dual SD cards for redundancy, 1 copy goes into my main backup drive and is organised by client and month. Then I skim through and select a bunch of photos, that I add to a portable SSD and to a folder in Lightroom. The editing process only happens after, and the final edits are stored in both storage options. Finally, I save them in Adobe Cloud. This is just the technical process. As for the creative process, there are certain projects that I've kept going back to for months, but putting them out depends on the mood and whether the audience is ready for it.

6. Have there been any memorable projects you've worked on or pictures you've captured?

The most memorable pictures from my collection would be when I wasn't even earning a cent from my camera. My passion drove me to get outside and take pictures for hours on end. Only 4-5 out of these would end up on my social media pages or portfolio, but those particular photos speak the language I want to be known for. Funnily enough, I remember almost every photograph I've captured, but the perfectionist in me will tell you that I'm still waiting on that one click, that is yet to satisfy me. There is also one recent snap I'm very fond of and I clicked it when two of my friends were getting married. So, as a gift to the two of them, I got this particular candid photo. Only candid pictures possess the unique magic of pieces that are hard to recreate.

7. Have there been any challenges or obstacles you've had to overcome in your journey thus far?

When I started taking photography seriously, I spent months understanding the intricate process of creation. So, a good nine months went into learning both the technical and business aspects of it. Unfortunately, I soon fell into a downward spiral, as I began chasing social media algorithms and valuing my work based on the responses I received. It got to a point where I closed shop and sold my gear because I wanted to start from scratch and unlearn some of the unhealthy traits I had built along the way. I had to embed into my mind that social media was nothing more than a tool and that no great creator from the past made three pieces of work, to be published on five different platforms, four times a week. All in all, I'd like to add that the pressure for creators is quite high, now more than ever.

8. Apart from all of this, when you go on your travels, what equipment do you usually carry with you?

My Sony A74 is my constant, and these days I have the 85mm lens on it, because I tend to limit my lens choices, so I would be able to understand it better and how it reacts in certain lighting conditions. If I know that I have the time for long exposures or landscape photographs, I would probably chuck in the travel tripod as well. If I fail to take any of my gear, I will always have the phone I'm carrying to click a picture, and to reiterate what I said at the beginning, my journey started with a mobile phone anyways.

9. Are there any photographers you've personally been influenced by?

For someone like me who has a wide oeuvre stretching from portrait and street to product photography, I do have quite a few influences. Henri Cartier-Bresson is someone who pioneered street photography as a genre. He was the first to believe and display the power of candid photography in the most volatile scenarios. His work revolved around the 1940s and then came Alex Webb. His photos are filled with 2-3 very powerful colours, he also authored a book called 'The Suffering of Light'. The two of them probably were the giants in the photography world. If I were to name a contemporary artist, that would be Sean Tucker. He leans more towards the philosophical aspect of why humans are

inherently fascinated with creativity and he has also written a book called 'The Meaning in the Making', which is definitely a must-read for everyone, photographer or not.

10. What messages do you try to tell the world through pictures?

In all honesty, I don't feel like sharing a picture if it doesn't have a hidden message in it. I have also left riddles and clues in my pictures most of the time. Mostly, I want people to cherish the little things in life. I want people to embrace themselves with and without their flaws, so I for one, know that I won't be famous for portraits. I try to snap pictures in the moment and keep my photographs as natural as they can be. Another message I try putting out is reminding people how privileged they are. Some of my photos might make a good part of society uneasy and I just love it.

11. Are there lessons or tips you would like to leave for up-and-coming photographers?

As a self-taught photographer, my first message is that you need to be very passionate about what you're doing. You might be able to learn all the technical aspects of the art from experienced photographers, but one thing I would definitely recommend is to cultivate empathy and this is because our work needs to mirror the emotions of the audiences we are doing it for. Be it a product shoot or anything for that matter, we are always working to cater to certain emotions of the client's market. Also, read or watch videos to understand colour or shape psychology and most importantly, learn marketing! This was my cheat code if I ever had the need for one. Also, make sure to invest in your career and remember your run will be short-lived if you are not obsessed enough to watch movies only to guess the gear and lighting techniques used.

12. What's next to be expected for 'Faz'?

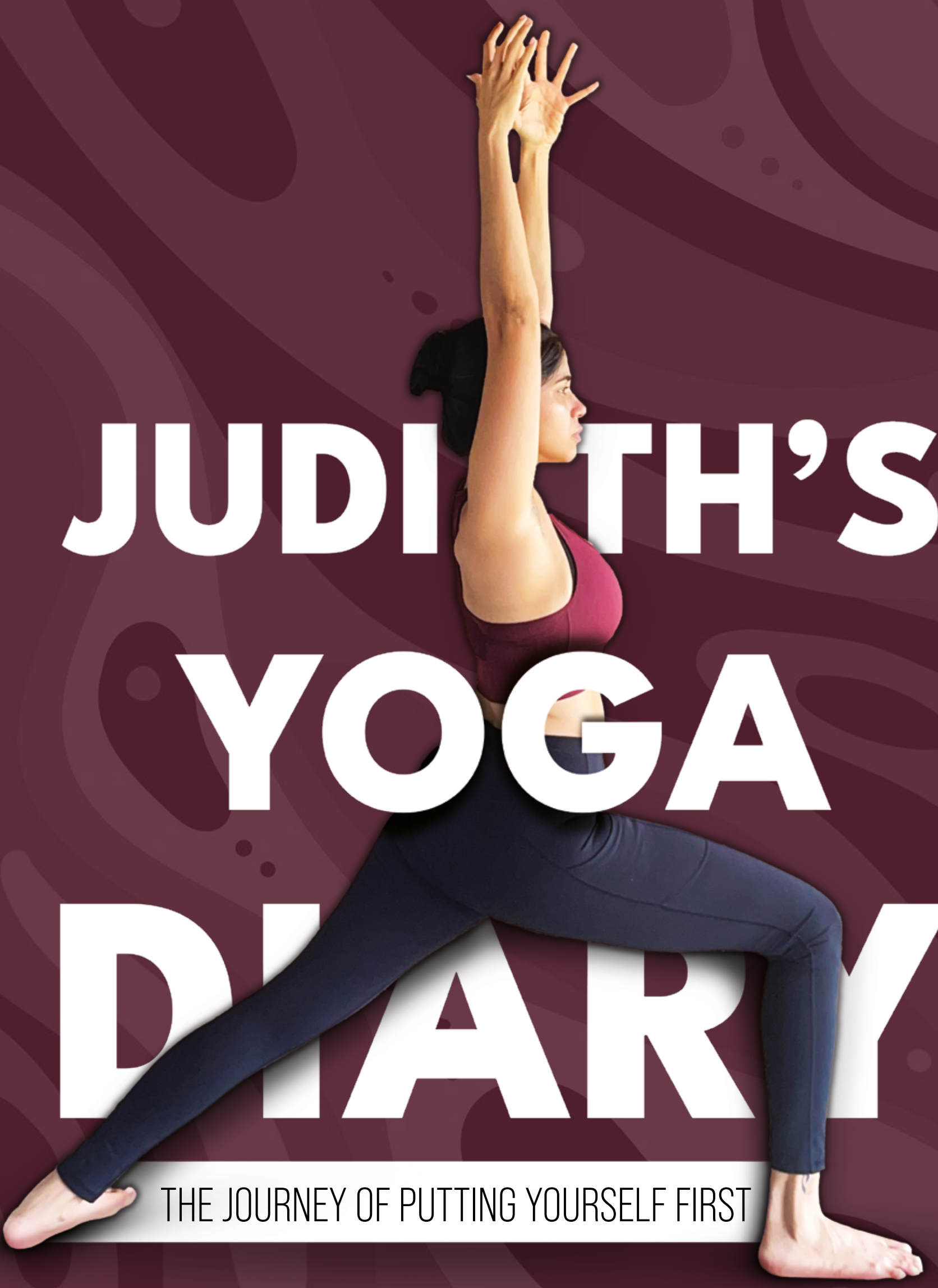
I am yet to visit a country with my camera in hand, so that is definitely something I would have up and coming. Parallel to this, I am working on starting my YouTube channel and documenting my journey, while trying to teach others what I have learnt. Everyone will also be able to find me on all platforms with the tag @fazmarkar.



SPA OPENING AND CHRISTMAS CAKE MIXING AT BROWNS HOTELS & RESORTS

Browns Hotels & Resorts unveiled the Aayu Spa, followed by a festive Christmas cake-mixing ceremony at Club Hotel Dolphin on 27th October. The event wrapped up at the Flippers Bar & Garden with sundown cocktails and a mouthwatering spread of global street food. Here are the highlights!





JUDITH'S YOGA DIARY

THE JOURNEY OF PUTTING YOURSELF FIRST

Mind, body, and soul – many would consider this the holy trinity of an individual regardless of caste, creed, race, or religion. Finding the right balance between these three aspects of our lives is of utmost importance since it helps us find peace within ourselves and provides us the motivation to take on life's challenges without being too overwhelmed.

By Nishara Fernando

Facing her own share of personal struggles and feelings of inadequacy, Judith Jansz took a leap of faith and broke away from the corporate rat race, to invest more time in a practice that helped her navigate through life's turmoils more easily.

She took a chance on herself, put her mental, physical, and spiritual welfare first – and thus, embarked on a journey that has now transformed into Judith's Yoga Diary.

COULD YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF?

My name is Judith Jansz and I am currently a full-time yoga teacher. I started my yoga teacher training at the start of 2022, and recently decided to stop working so I can focus on this full-time. Before that, I was in the corporate world for 10 years and was involved in product marketing.

DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONALITY IN FOUR WORDS.

I'm friendly, curious, sometimes shy, and maybe a little bit of an overthinker, as well. Not maybe – I am an overthinker. This is mostly why I've chosen yoga as a path now.

WHAT EXACTLY INSPIRED YOU TO EMBARK ON YOUR YOGA JOURNEY?

I started yoga in 2018 when I was going through a very difficult time personally. I used to exercise and go to the gym and as a result, I was stressed. I had a lot of muscle pains and aches and many people, including my physiotherapist, told me to try yoga.

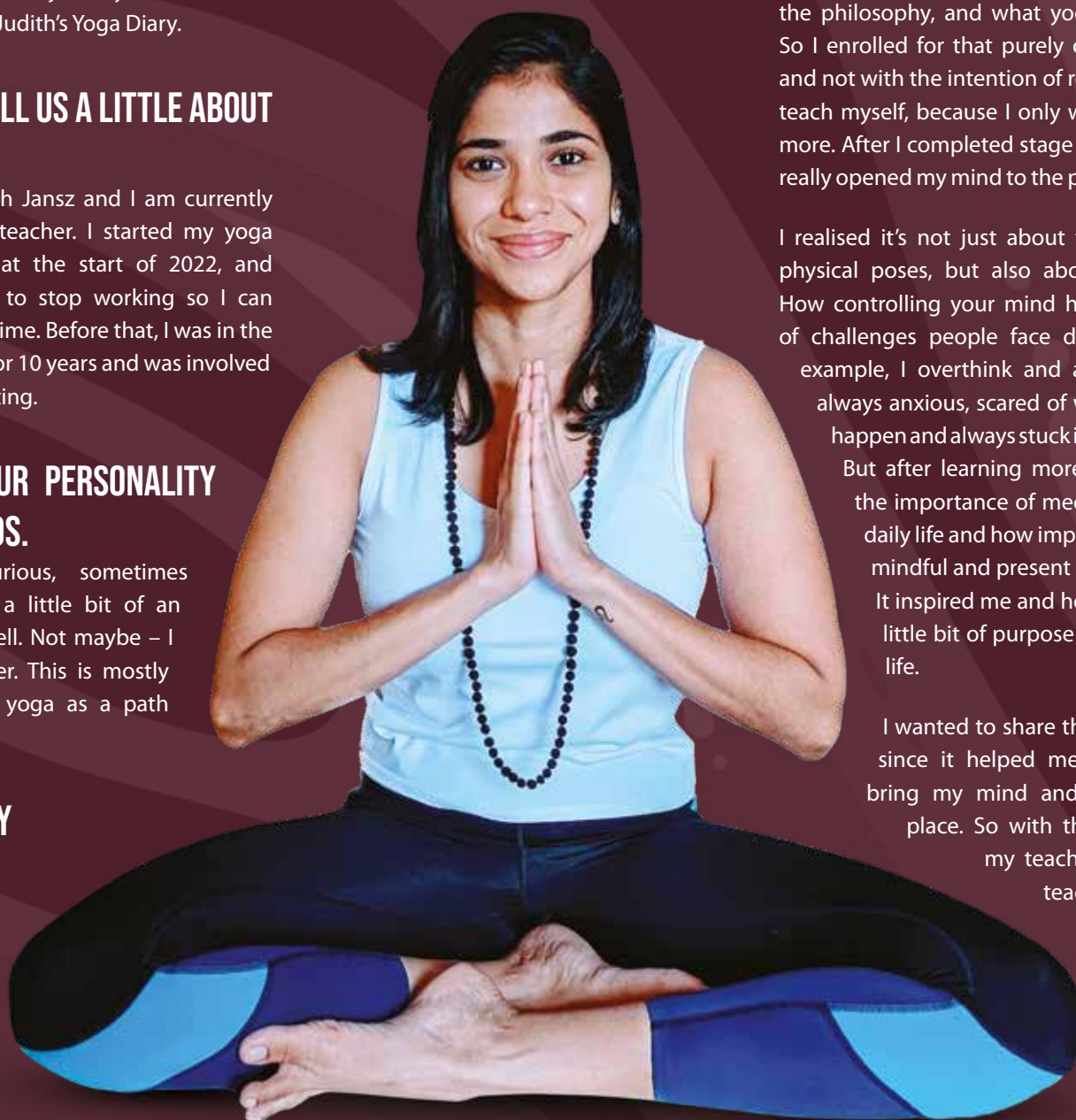
So I found my teacher, Dr. Miuru Jayaweera. I was recommended to her by my partner and I started classes once a week. From that point on, I really loved it and

I still continue to. It was a beginner practice, mostly focusing on the body and practising mindfulness. It really helped me cope with the stress of work and personal life problems.

At the start of this year, I didn't actually plan on starting to teach. So while doing our regular practice, my teacher and guru, Dr. Miuru started teaching us more about yoga. She started a teacher training course to basically give us an insight into the history, the philosophy, and what yoga is all about. So I enrolled for that purely out of curiosity and not with the intention of really starting to teach myself, because I only wanted to learn more. After I completed stage one with her, it really opened my mind to the practice of yoga.

I realised it's not just about these beautiful physical poses, but also about your mind. How controlling your mind helps with a lot of challenges people face day to day. For example, I overthink and as a result, I'm always anxious, scared of what's going to happen and always stuck in my own head. But after learning more, I understood the importance of meditation in your daily life and how important it is to be mindful and present in the moment. It inspired me and helped me find a little bit of purpose in my personal life.

I wanted to share that with people since it helped me so greatly to bring my mind and body to one place. So with the guidance of my teacher, I started to teach.



WHAT TYPE OF CLIENTELE DO YOU CATER TO?

I cater to anyone of any age really, who wants to practise yoga. My clientele includes teenagers, young adults and even seniors in their 50s to 60s, however, I don't take on clients with serious medical conditions. This is because there's a more specialised path for people with ailments called medical yoga.

Apart from that, anyone can join my one-hour class, since it's beginner-level and suitable for anyone who's curious to try yoga.

WHERE DO YOU CONDUCT YOUR SESSIONS?

I currently conduct my classes at Stretch Studio in Nawala on Thursdays (6.30-7.30 pm) and Sundays (8.30-9.30 am). I have online classes on Wednesdays (6.30-7.30 pm) and Sundays (11.30 am-12.30 pm) which are mostly for a client base in Australia.

I also conduct a class at my teacher's studio, Myrus Yoga & Fitness, every Monday from 6.15-7.15 am.

APART FROM YOGA, WHAT OTHER ACTIVITIES DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR DOWNTIME?

Fitness is very important to me, so I like to exercise. I do regular workouts and go to the gym. I also cycle and go for jogs with my friends, which not only helps me stay fit but also helps me spend time with friends.

I also spend a lot of time reading romance novels. Recently I've been obsessed with Dinah Jefferies and Santa Montefiore.

Other than that, I love to eat. I love to go out at least 2-3 times a week with my partner or my friends. We go to either Seed Cafe or Life's Good Kitchen, where they have healthy food with good options.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE CUISINE?

I mentioned eating all these healthy foods but my favourite food is pizza from Mama Louie's! I indulge at least once every two weeks.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU HAVE FOR SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO INCORPORATE YOGA INTO THEIR DAILY LIVES?

Once you take control of your mind, everything else just falls into place.

You may feel sad, angry, or depressed during bad times but with yoga, you connect your mind, body, and soul – which is a great way to cope with life's

challenges and change your perspective. Invariably, this helps you deal with life a little bit better.

Meditation is very similar to yoga, but when you practise yoga, you give your mind a break and it helps you see a solution to a problem more clearly without getting too overwhelmed.

I would advise anyone who is going through a challenging time to try yoga. Don't associate it with a religion or your body size, none of that matters. Even if you want to just come and relax at a class and not do the physical exercises, you can always watch the others, take in the energy and really give yourself the time to regenerate.

ANY FINAL THOUGHTS?

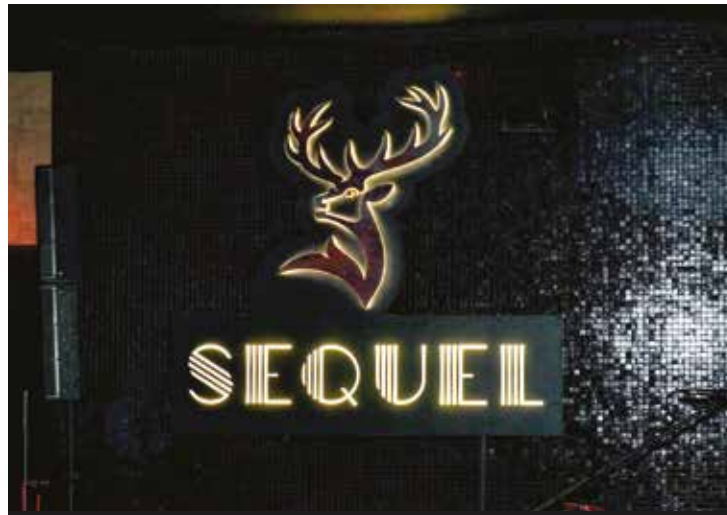
While I was working in the corporate world, I was doing a good job at some great companies. But deep inside, I was very unhappy. It was never enough and I just didn't know what to do next. But the person who really pushed me and inspired me was my partner Fahad. He and my family really encouraged me to do this course, learn more about yoga and see where it would take me. My guru Dr. Miuru played a key role too.

I guess with anything, having a good support system is important. It's really important who you surround yourself with, especially those who believe in you on days you don't believe in yourself.





Kumar



Launch of Sequel at Cinnamon Grand

Cinnamon Grand brought back the golden age of nightlife with the launch of Sequel! The sophisticated space invites its patrons to experience a timeless aesthetic, indulging in fashion, music and dance, and of course, appreciation for classic elegance. Take a glimpse of the sterling evening celebrating its grand opening on 14 September.



Ranshan

Dani



Thosshan

Suzie

Deen



Sasha

Chethana



Kavindri

Nishu

Mahika

Harshani



Malintha, Kamal, Gerard and Kapila



Shafiya



Joel



Kamal



Nalin

Heshani



Caroline

Nishantha



Naamini

Gamith



Heshani

Janik

Danu



Stijn

Nimmi



Gehan

Shaziya

Dulan

Nadee



Nadim



Shamza

7degrees

Restaurant & Bar Launch

The grand opening of the 7degrees Restaurant & Bar took place on 08 December with a night of cocktails and loads of entertainment.

Check out the highlights of the evening!



Ayesh



Nalin

Mrs Malwenna

Heshani



Brian

Shohan



Aritha



Araliya



Ashanthi



Nelum



Ranshan



Tharushi, Melissa, Viruli, Nisha, Dion, Vithaya, Dilan and Dian



Senuri

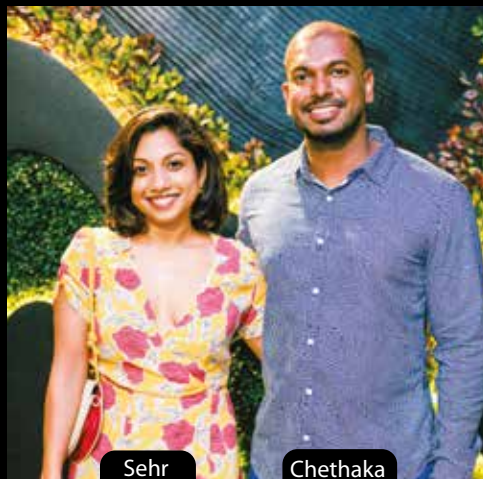
Thushen



Anuki

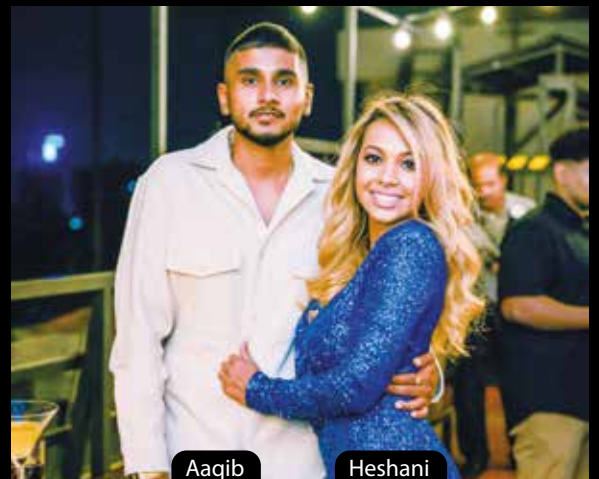
Tharindi

Deepa



Sehr

Chethaka



Aaqib

Heshani

FROM A SMALL VILLAGE IN JAFFNA TO THE ONE OF BIGGEST CITIES IN CANADA

TRAILING THE LIFE OF FILMMAKER LENIN M. SIVAM

Sri Lankan-Canadian filmmaker Lenin M. Sivam, like many Sri Lankans living in the North during the country's troubled past, moved to Canada when his family decided to escape the war for a better life. But this didn't stop him from making a name for himself in an industry he says is "nothing short of magic" to him. Filmmaking is the only thing that stirred Sivam and he had no doubts about wanting to pursue it, although he did take some detours before doing what he truly loved full-time.

By Jennifer Anandanayagam

If you look at his filmography – '1999' (2009), 'Uruthy' – Strength (2007), Roobha (2018), 'The Protector' (2022), and 'A Gun and a Ring' (2013) – you'll start to see a pattern. Sivam's movies mean something to the director. The stories he tells are ones he cares about. They tackle the sensitive issues of identity, mental health, and Tamils making a home for themselves on foreign shores after fleeing the island nation to escape ethnic tensions.

"The Sri Lankan civil war has always been a part of my life and it, to some degree, shaped me into the person I am today," he told Pulse. Everything from his name to where he is now and where he is headed has been influenced by the war, he says. "I think I will never be able to detach the war from my life and it will always be there with me. I guess this is why my films are mostly about the war."

Connecting with us from the other side of the world, Sivam told us about how he built his life up as an immigrant, and about his sojourn as a filmmaker. Here are some excerpts from the chat.

Do you recall much of your life in SL before you moved to Toronto, Canada?

I moved to Canada when I was 17 and I can still vividly recall many memories. Those memories consist of many things – our village temple festivals, going to the theatres to watch the latest Tamil movies, playing cricket with friends, going to the beach for a swim,

and also the bad memories – the war, shelling, bombing, blood, and dead bodies.

What was it like, settling down and eventually building a life in Toronto, Canada? What were the challenges?

I grew up in a small remote village in the North with about 300 families. Back there, everyone knew each other, and my world was very small. Then I moved to one of the biggest cities in the world, Toronto, and everything was different. The language was the biggest issue for me at the beginning, but luckily I came when I was young and was able to adapt quickly to the change. Now, I am more comfortable in Toronto than in my village in Sri Lanka.

Tell me about your creative process. You write and produce your films. How do you turn an idea into a movie?

I don't have a specific creative process. I often get an idea for a character, then slowly that character grows within me, and in time, that character will reveal many other characters and a plot. Then I sit down and start to write. All of my films that were written by me started off this way.

If you could pick one of your films to be the closest to your heart, which one would you pick and why?

All my films are very close to my heart. If I have to pick one, then it has to be '1999'. In the early 90s growing up in Toronto, I faced gang issues day in and day out. As a Tamil student, I was stopped or chased many times in the street when I was mistaken for a gang member.

You are a self-taught filmmaker. What advice would you give someone aspiring to get into filmmaking?

Start shooting. Don't look deep into films and complicate your life, stop watching the masters and trying to be like them; just get out there and start shooting. That's the only way you can learn the craft. Don't be scared of what others are going to think about your film, just get out there and shoot a short film or feature and complete it. Don't be those sophisticated



movie buffs, I feel sorry for them. They get into a trap and end up never making a film.

Is filmmaking a profession you'd choose if you were given another chance at starting out in life?

I wanted to go to a film school when I graduated from high school and my mom didn't allow it. She didn't believe that there was a future for me. Instead, I went and finished my computer science degree and started my life as a software developer. Then I became a part-time filmmaker and eventually a full-time filmmaker. Those whom I envied who went to film school from my high school are still flipping burgers at fast food restaurants. I must say that I am thankful to my mom for forcing me to take the conventional way; otherwise, I'd be flipping burgers too. This is the sad reality of pursuing filmmaking as a career.

Why do you think the Tamil movie industry in Sri Lanka isn't where it could be, given the potential?

Recently I gave a speech to a class at the University of Jaffna about this and the following are some of the points I made. Tamil people are not ready to accept something different from the garbage that comes out of the Indian Tamil film industry. There's not enough population to sustain an industry. There's a lack of professionals, especially professional actors. There's not enough money. There's a

lack of government incentives or support. Art is still a luxury for Tamil people as they still haven't recovered from the effects of the war. Finally, there's a lack of film schools or training centres to learn cinema properly.

What are three things you love about Sri Lanka? Three things you don't?

I love: Weather, people, and the beaches. I don't like: Politics, extremists, and poverty.

How's Canada treated you as an immigrant?

Canada is a beautiful country, it treated me and my family very well. As a Canadian, I am not discriminated against or treated differently in any way. That doesn't mean that I never faced racism here, it happens everywhere, but the rights and privileges that I enjoy are exactly the same for everyone else in Canada. This is something that I wish we can implement in Sri Lanka.

What is your message to the Sri Lankan people at this difficult time in history for the nation?

I feel bad that we have to repeatedly experience these hardships, but the recent changes that took place are encouraging. I am hoping it will all be over soon and everyone in Sri Lanka can live in harmony.

What are you working on right now?

I am working on a few different scripts but the one I have been trying to get off the ground

is my dream project called 'Black July'. It's a love story about a young beautiful Sinhalese woman and a young Tamil man set during the bloody Sri Lankan riots of July 1983. I want to go back to the very beginning when it all started and show the fragile beauty of people, cultures, and hope through the improbable yet true romance of these two people.



I grew up in a small remote village in the North with about 300 families. Back there, everyone knew each other, and my world was very small. Then I moved to one of the biggest cities in the world, Toronto, and everything was different.



20th Anniversary Screening of Dr L J Peiris' Wekande Walauwa

Alliance Française de Colombo hosted a special screening of Dr Lester James Peiris' award-winning Sinhalese drama film, *Wekande Walauwa* (Mansion by the Lake) on 15 September to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the film's release and in tribute to the late director's life and legacy.



Eric Lavertu - The Ambassador
of France to Sri Lanka and
Maldives



Sriyani



Sangeetha

Sanath

Pabodha



Nihara

Kumar



Sumithra



Veena



Yasmin

Kumar



Sangeetha

Sumithra

Ratnum

Sriyani

Sanath

Pabodha

PRESSPLAY CREATIONS

THE GO-TO DREAM TEAM FOR ALL YOUR
DECORATIVE NEEDS



Sri Lankans love a good party and nothing beats the sense of euphoria when you enter a beautifully done space to celebrate a memorable occasion. From colour schemes to sorting out flower arrangements, organising an event is no easy task. That's where PressPlay Creations enters with its expertise, resourcefulness and youthful team – giving you a holistic service offering for any function; whether it's a birthday party, engagement, wedding, baby shower, home or office decor.

By Nishara Fernando

Four years ago, Michelle, the star of the show, was encouraged by her office colleagues to open a page where she could share her crafty decorations with the community. What started as a simple passion project soon grew into a sought-after business, which is now managed with the support of her family and

close friends. Evidently, Michelle's core team of three soon grew to 13, and to this date shows no signs of slowing down.

"Find a job you enjoy doing, and you will never have to work a day in your life." - Mark Twain

WHAT IS YOUR STORY?

Since I was a child, my parents used to decorate our house for Christmas from the 1st of December every year. My father would play Christmas carols and I fondly remember taking part in the festivities by helping them decorate the house. It has been years now, and I'm proud to say that it's a family affair as my children are very much involved in keeping those traditions alive.

I am currently employed at United Capital, which is where I started on this journey. I used to cut and chop things whenever office

events came around, and it was actually my colleagues who encouraged me to take this on. So I started taking on more projects to decorate offices in time for Christmas.

WOULD YOU CALL THIS YOUR PASSION?

Yes, absolutely! For me, it's far less about money but rather the satisfaction I feel whenever I see my creations come to life. For example, whenever I do a backdrop, it's so fulfilling to see people come, take pictures and even wait their turn for a picture. That feeling is something money cannot buy. I always enjoy seeing others take an interest in my work as I put many hours into researching, creating and making samples that soon turn into a bigger project.

AS A MODERN WOMAN JUGGLING A FULL-TIME JOB AND HOMEFRONT, HAVE YOU FACED ANY CHALLENGES WITH PURSUING YOUR PASSION?

It's challenging because while I do my sales job, I have to study for my post-graduate diploma as well. After a long day of work, going to classes and taking care of the household, I would finally sit with my laptop around 11 pm every day to go on Pinterest and search for new ideas or make samples at home.

I always had a desire to make crafts, so I didn't see it as a burden because I always found it so pleasing to do.

HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN THIS CREATIVE?

Yes. When I was small, I often frequented bookstores with my aunties to purchase cardboard and coloured crayons. When I was in grade 8 or 9, I used these materials to make party hats and other little items back in the day since they weren't as easily available as they are today. I've always had a liking to make decorations which has followed me well into adulthood today. That's how it all started.



Clients usually contact us on our page. Some clients already have an image in their mind of what they want and how it should look. The rest say that they don't have anything in mind, so we have more freedom to let our creativity flow. We are open to anything. If we feel like some pieces do not match, we try to explain it to them. But there are some people who don't want to stray from what they initially wanted.

One of our biggest seasons is during Christmas, when we are called to decorate offices and other spaces for the holidays.



We are also building a home office which will be opened on my son's birthday, the 16th of April.

ONE FINAL MESSAGE?

People are often unsatisfied with things they do or what they get in return. They always think nothing is ever enough. There are so many opportunities where you can do so much with the little that you have. Everybody has some sort of talent and potential that they can use to make a difference. If you need change, you should be willing to put in the work and not sit around waiting for it to happen. After all, when the going gets tough, the tough get going.

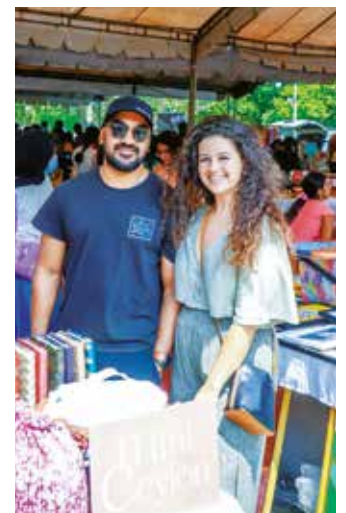
Someday, I hope PressPlay will be the best in the business. We hope to expand our services to offer holistic event solutions, where all our clients' needs are taken care of from A to Z.

Apart from Christmas, we also look into other event materials such as backdrops, lighting, music, entertainment etc. While I look into the decorative aspect, my son and daughter take the driving seat in organising events and



The November Island Market

The November edition of the Island Market was held at Crescat Boulevard with small and sustainable vendors from across Colombo. Here's how it went!



A portrait of Seniya Samarasekera, a middle-aged man with a receding hairline, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt with a subtle diamond pattern. He is standing in front of a brick wall with a golden statue of a deity in the background. His hands are clasped in front of him, and he is wearing a watch on his left wrist and a red string on his right.

SENIYA SAMARASEKERA

Taking Sri Lanka's event management industry to new heights

“Entertainment is in my blood,” says Seniya Samarasekera, one of Sri Lanka’s leaders in the event management industry. He is the CEO and Managing Director of AV Productions, a company he created so he could pursue what he loved. Now with 30 years of experience in the field, he’s accumulated the knowledge and connections that could take Sri Lanka to new heights.

Samarasekera told us that diversification in business is a crucial skill to climb up the professional ladder. Read on to find out about Samarasekera’s most diverse business ventures.

By Pahani Fernando

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I am the Managing Director and the CEO of AV Productions. We started this company in 1992, right after I returned from the U.K. after completing my higher education. Prior to this, I studied at D.S. Senanayake College Colombo. Being a part of the entertainment industry has always been a passion of mine and I got exposed to it during my time abroad. After returning, it just felt like the best time to pursue my dreams. At home, I had a good support system with my mother being very supportive and my father helping me out with the finances to get my dreams on track. This company was created to cater to Sri Lankans and our unique culture.

What are some lessons you’ve learned from your 30 years of experience in this industry?

I’ve learned many lessons from my time in this industry but one of the most important lessons would be learning how to creatively pitch ideas to clients. Learning how to capture the uniquely human aspect of a business is key. We’re all going through a tough time now so learning how to navigate that is also key. Personally, it was difficult getting down equipment and other resources needed to maintain the business. Therefore, slowly building up our inventory was also something that I learned along the way. Networking is also really important for any business, I’ve gotten better at that along the way.

What are some of the biggest projects AV Productions has completed?

Looking back at the 30 years of experience, I’m really proud of how far we’ve come. Especially

in the last five years, we’ve done some amazing projects. In 2017, when Sri Lanka hosted the Asia Pacific Group Regional Training event, the 2016 World Export Development Forum, the World Health Organisation’s Asia Pacific Conference, World Health Day, and many other international conferences, those were some of our most recognised work.

How is AV Productions coping with the current situation?

Like most businesses, we are also facing a tough time. However, since we’ve already built a foundation for 30 years, thankfully, we have it better than a few other companies. A lot of staff left because of Covid-19 as well so we’re handling new recruits.

You are also part of the Event Management Association (EMA) of Sri Lanka; could you tell us a little bit about what that is like?

The EMA was formed soon after the Easter Sunday attacks to revive the event management industry in the country. I was appointed as the first secretary of the association and worked in that capacity for two years. The work we did was very important because, following the attacks, a lot of core values had been lost. During the pandemic, we worked with students from the University of Moratuwa and got approvals from the Tourist Board. We did a lot of fundraising events to support people in this industry who had lost jobs and their revenues. We’ve been able to create more unity within the event management industry and we’re all working towards one goal instead of following personal agendas.

Where do you see yourself in five years and what kind of adventures are you hoping to have in the future?

Digital is the future so we are preparing ourselves for that. We’ve already incorporated a lot of digital technologies like green screen technology and so forth. However, to execute these, we need support from the clients as well; the best result comes from a cooperative effort. Sri Lanka is one of the most popular destinations for events and weddings. The government also has to play a part in promoting destination events here. The Tourism Development Authority and the Tourism Promotion Bureau are working hard toward this. The EMA is already a part of Sri Lanka Tourism so it’s in good hands.

Tell us a little bit about the team behind AV Productions and how it came into being.

We have an amazing staff, I am very thankful for them. They are very supportive and hardworking. They’re a creative bunch and helped get the business to where it is today. I also have to thank my wife who stepped in to help out with business matters, she runs the show as one of the directors. Our other director – Bandara – is excellent at his work. Both of them are invaluable assets to the company. I love this job. Entertainment is in my blood so I enjoy every single minute of it.

Any final thoughts that you’d like to share?

Diversification is very important to a business. In the past 10 years, we’ve looked more seriously into this. We’ve developed a digital health platform for Picture Archiving and Communications System (PACS) and Radiological Information System (RIS). 20 main hospitals are using this to run operations. I have also diversified into renewable energy projects in the North, producing up to 100 megawatts. We’re also expanding to have a leisure arm which will have an event venue on the banks of Bolgoda. It was delayed due to the pandemic but we are back on track now. We’re also partnered with the government to do projects for hybrid alternative mineral fertiliser. Hopefully, by October we’ll kick start operations.

Diversification is something everyone should look into, without sticking to one industry alone.

**MAHADEVAN
SATHASIVAM**



**THE
GREATEST
BATSMAN
ON EARTH**

Former West Indian cricketer Garfield Sobers called him "the greatest batsman on earth." Accumulating 40 centuries and four double centuries in his cricketing life, Mahadevan Sathasivam's story is etched into the chronicles of Sri Lankan cricket.

By Maheen Fernando

Early life

Sathasivam first started "parading" with the bat when he attended St. Joseph's College as a young boy and later on at Wesley College. His style of play enthralled audiences and whenever his name was printed on the roster, women would swarm to the grounds just to watch him play without caring about how the game would end. His presence on the pitch was enough to ignite a fiery spark within spectators as they sat in anticipation of an unforgettable performance. His drives, late cuts, and pull shots were awe-inspiring and his finesse had people reeling. As a schoolboy, he looked promising in the eyes of many people. He was the talk of the town, fans envisioned him being the future of Ceylonese cricket. Unfortunately, making it into the national team wasn't as smooth a ride as people expected it to be. Despite being consistent with his batting, he was overlooked by the MCC (Marylebone Cricket Club) in 1936 and it wasn't until he was nearing 30 years of age that he made his first appearance in a Ceylon jersey.

International debut

During the second world war, in 1944, Sathasivam made his first-class debut playing for The Rest. The Rest was an Indian first-class cricket team that took part in the annual Bombay Pentangular tournament. On his debut against the Muslims cricket team, he faced bowling that was unrivalled and far more rigorous than he had experienced back home in Ceylon, but he kept his composure and smashed a salvaging 101 runs. Following the return of international cricket in 1945, after the sport had been severely disrupted due to the war, Sathasivam was finally granted a chance to represent the nation. His international debut was a three-day match against the visiting Indians. Initially, it was a tough game for the home side with them being on the short end of the stick, however,

Sathasivam managed to save the game for Ceylon with his proficient score of 111 against the likes of bowlers Lala Amarnath and Vinoo Mankad who had procured 3 and 10 wickets respectively. Fast forward to February 1947 when he faced Southern India and played what was proclaimed to be the greatest innings ever played in Chepauk.

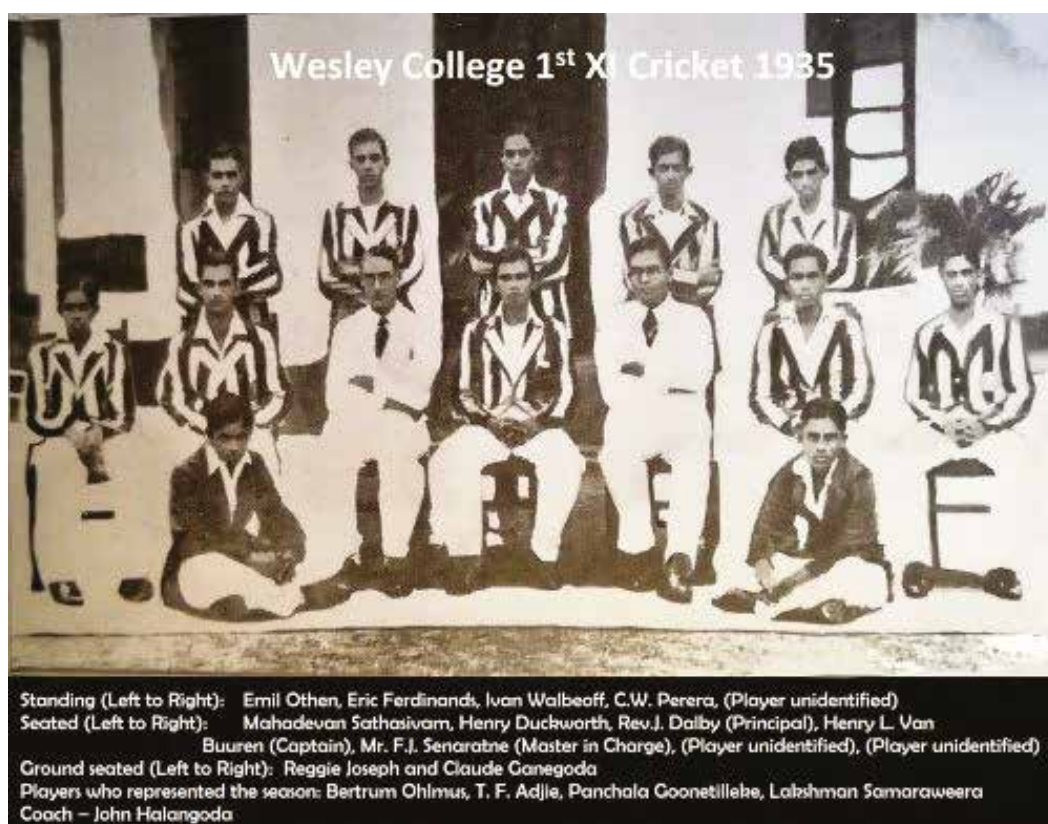
Chepauk innings

Sathasivam touched down in Madras (aka Chennai) ready to take on Southern India, ready to face whatever came his way, but to his misfortune, before the match could start, he realised that he had forgotten to bring a bat along with him to India. So, he hastily made his way to AG Ram Singh's Sports Shop to sort out his problem. He picked up a bat that was autographed by former Australian cricketer Lindsay Hassett. On his way to the middle of the pitch, an astute fan wagered him a bottle of scotch if he scored a century; Sathasivam simply nodded in acceptance of the challenge and carried on making his way

to the batting end. When stumps were called for the day, he had aggregated 134 runs to his name. As promised, the fan handed over the bottle of scotch and proposed another bet that sounded tantalising, yet suspicious at the same time. The fan vowed to gift him a week's trip to Bombay under the condition that "Satha" reached his double century the following day. Sathasivam grabbed the bottle of scotch and his defiant persona took over when he uttered a single word, "Taken".

Sathasivam downed the entire bottle of scotch through the night (this was no surprise as he had an intimate and cordial relationship with booze). Fuelled with liquor the next morning, Sathasivam required the help of Ceylon wicketkeeper Ben Nawaratne to stand up straight and make it to breakfast. Regardless of this, he geared up and made his way to the pitch to resume his innings. The rest was history as he ended up annihilating the South Indian bowling line-up by smashing 215 runs, propelling Ceylon to a domineering win by an innings and 114 runs. The sound of Sathasivam's willow off the ball reverberated in the heads of the South Indian bowlers, haunting them. The innings he played at Chepauk was played with such class and integrity. No matter how arduous the conditions were, Sathasivam did not back down. He left the grounds with his hands clasping the trip expenses he had so rightfully earned.

Former Indian captain and spinner Ghulam Ahmed shared, "I will never forget how he thrashed me in Chennai, I have bowled to Bradman, Harvey, Hutton, Denis Compton,





Keith Miller, and The Terrible Ws – Weekes, Worrall, and Walcott, and if you ask me who the most difficult batsman I have bowled to is, I will mention a name that you may or may not know, the man from Ceylon, Mahadevan Sathasivam.”

Ahmed also observed, “Satha, with wonderful footwork, treated every bowler with disdain... I have never seen better innings in all my life to this day, and it is unlikely I shall.”

Captaining against Don Bradman

In March 1948, Don Bradman and his players set foot in Ceylon to play a short one-day match. Bradman, who had never toured South Africa, India, New Zealand, or the West Indies, wanted to play in Ceylon. Once word of this got out, it caused a huge frenzy amongst the cricketing fans of Colombo and people gathered at the Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu Stadium (or P. Sara Oval) with a colossal amount of feverishness, causing a problematic jam around the perimeter of the stadium. The match saw a record crowd of 23,000 attendees at the P. Sara Oval. What’s more, was that Sathasivam was chosen to lead the men of Ceylon for this match. This was a monumental accolade for the batsman as this meant that he was honoured with making the toss with the great Sir Donald Bradman. The match kickstarted with the Australians piling up 184 runs for the loss of 8 wickets, after which they declared. Disappointingly, stumps were drawn when the Ceylonese scored 46/2 and the rain showed up uninvited.

Gaining recognition

Sathasivam’s feats have had the biggest names in cricket commending his style of play

with former West Indian cricketer Sir Garfield Sobers going as far as to say that Sathasivam is “the greatest batsman ever on earth”. In 1950, the Commonwealth XI made an appearance in Ceylon for a three-day match against Sathasivam’s men, which they won by an innings and 51 runs. The Ceylon squad faced an uphill battle when they were losing wickets at a swift pace on the green pitch. Their performance with the bat had the illusion of being lackadaisical, however, Sathasivam’s grandiose 96 saved Ceylon from a dreary innings when they were barrelled for 153 runs. Former West Indian cricketer Frank Worrell who also played for the Commonwealth XI, later hailed Sathasivam as a great batsman saying he was “the best batsman he had ever seen”. He went on to add that if he had to pick a world XI, Sathasivam’s name would be the first name on the team sheet.

Saying goodbye to Ceylon

The day was 9 October 1951. Sathasivam’s wife, Anandam Rajendra, was found dead by strangulation in the garage of the Sathasivam residence. Police launched investigations into the appalling crime and the blame fell on Sathasivam. He was incarcerated for 20 months; however, he was released from police custody when the court acquitted him of committing the crime. The house servant William was found guilty. Sathasivam’s time as a prisoner would change his life as he wouldn’t play for Ceylon following the conclusion of the murder case. He had shifted with his new wife, Yvonne, and his four daughters to Singapore, accepting a job as an insurance agent. While selling insurance plans, he didn’t bid farewell to cricket; he captained the Singapore team. Hoarding a great volume of runs while in

Singapore, he added three more kids to his family and shifted to Malaya (now, Malaysia). He ended up being sanctioned as the captain of the Malaysian team. This gave birth to an uncorroborated world record with Sathasivam becoming the first-ever individual to captain three international teams in his cricketing career.

The final silver lining

Mahadevan Sathasivam suffered a heart attack on 9 July 1977 and he left the world at the bright age of 61. He contributed a lot to Sri Lankan cricket and has laid the foundation for future generations to showcase their prowess on an international scale. Sathasivam was like fine wine; the older he got, the better he became on the pitch. In modern-day cricket, athletes think of retiring when they reach the age of 30, yet Sathasivam reached his prime at that very age which is a testament to his spirit as a relentless fighter. Regrettably, there is no video footage of him on the field which leads to more forgetting a prodigy with each passing year. We have, however, the words of spectators who were blessed with the chance to watch him exhibit his dexterity in all its beauty, and his name will forever be immortalised in all of cricket history.

MAHADEVAN SATHASIVAM’S BEST SCORES

- In 1944
(For Rest) vs. Bombay Muslims
101 RUNS
- In 1945
(For Ceylon) vs. India
111 RUNS
(For Tamil Union) vs. SSC
167 RUNS
- In 1947
(For Ceylon Cricket Association)
vs. South India
215 RUNS
(For Tamil Union) vs. SSC
163 RUNS
- In 1950
(For Ceylon) vs. Commonwealth XI
96 RUNS



The De Lanerolle Brothers Brings Back Retro!

An era of retro was brought back for one night only by the De Lanerolles! The De Lanerolle Brothers and their Squared Band performed a theatre-style concert with roaring hits from the '60s, '70s and '80s at Hilton Colombo with a guest appearance by the De Lanerolle cousins.

Here's how it went!



Pascal Niranga



Danu Binuri Janeeth



Rosanna



Prithi



Ramani Ramzi



COOKING

WITH Auntie D.

Auntie D. is a full-time mom working a little magic in the kitchen whenever she's got time on her hands. She brings to you easy and fast recipes with a twist of Sri Lankan spices and cooking techniques. Get cooking!

Roast Chicken

Ingredients

- Whole Chicken
- Pepper 2 tsp
- Salt 1 ½ tsp
- Soy Sauce 1 ½ tsp
- Oyster Sauce 1 ½ tsp
- Mustard 2 tsp
- Rosemary 1 tsp
- Lime Juice

Method

- To make the marinade, combine pepper, salt, soy sauce, oyster sauce, mustard and rosemary.
- Rub the mixture thoroughly on the chicken and let it marinate for 2- 3 hours.
- Add a squeeze of lime juice and place the marinated chicken in the oven to roast for 45 minutes at 200°C and your juicy roast chicken is ready to be served!



Christmas Fruit Cake

Ingredients

- Sugar 200 g
- Margarine 250 g
- Eggs 4 nos
- Cashew Nuts 50 g
- Raisins 50 g
- Dates 100 g
- Cherries 50 g
- Baking Soda ½ tsp
- Milk ¼ cup
- Flour 200 g
- Baking Powder 2 tsp
- Vanilla 2 tsp

Method

- Whisk together sugar and margarine until it forms a creamy texture, and add the eggs to the mixture.
- In a separate bowl, mix cashew nuts, raisins, dates, cherries, milk and baking soda and keep aside for 10 minutes.
- In another bowl, mix together flour and baking powder.
- Combine the egg batter with the mixed fruits and a few drops of vanilla.
- Fold the flour mixture into the mixed fruit batter and mix thoroughly to make sure there are no lumps.
- Finally, place the cake batter in the oven to bake at 160°C for 35 minutes. Once it cools down, grab a slice with a warm cup of tea!





Roast Pork

Ingredients

- Pork 1.5 kg
- Soy Sauce 2 tsp
- Pepper 1 ½ tsp
- Salt 1 ½ tsp
- Mixed Herbs 1 tsp
- Mustard 2 tsp
- Bee Honey 1 tbsp

Method

- To make the glaze, combine soy sauce, pepper, salt, mixed herbs, mustard and bee honey.
- Rub the glaze thoroughly on the pork and let it marinate for 3 hours.
- Place the marinated pork in the oven to bake for 45 minutes at 200°C and it's ready to be served!

King Coconut Wine

Ingredients

- King Coconut 2 nos
- Cardamom 5 nos
- Clove 10 nos
- Cinnamon ½ inch
- Sugar 200 g
- Yeast 1 tsp

Method

- Extract the king coconut water and pour it into a glass jar.
- Add cardamoms, cloves, cinnamon, sugar and yeast and combine well.
- Cover the king coconut mixture and store for one month (ensuring the bottle is not sealed too tightly).
- Finally, strain the fermented mixture and pour yourself a fancy glass of spiced King Coconut Wine!

COCKTAIL SPECIALS

for Christmas

Creating 'Cocktails with Valarie' was never the plan for Sasala Dissanayake, but who would regret becoming notorious for making some killer cocktails? During the pandemic, Sasala a.k.a Valarie, started conceptualising and concocting some boozy experiments that quickly became a hit among her friends and family. Her recipes are a fantastic delight, highlighting her cocktails with local flavours & ingredients!

In the spirit of the holiday season, 'Cocktails with Valarie' brings you some of her signature cocktails to make at home this Christmas. Whip out your Mixology skills at home and make it a December to remember!

Location - 7 Degrees Restaurants



BLUEBERRY SMASH (1 NOS)

INGREDIENTS

- 50ml Vodka (Ideally Blueberry-infused)
- 2 tsp. White Sugar
- 6 No's Fresh Blueberries
- Soda
- 4 c. Ice
- A Heavy Bottom Rock Glass (Whisky Glass)

METHOD

- Add Blueberries and Sugar into the rock glass, and muddle the Berries well.
- Next, mix in the ice and Vodka, and top off the glass with Soda.



EGGLESS NOG COCKTAIL (1 NOS)

INGREDIENTS

- 50ml Dark/Red Rum
- 25ml Cooking Cream
- 1 tsp. Cinnamon Powder
- 8 c. Ice
- A Coupe Glass

METHOD

- Add the Ice and Cooking Cream into a cocktail shaker, shake vigorously for approximately 30 seconds and set it aside to be used later.
- Add the Rum into the Coupe Glass, with the back of a spoon kept inside the rim of the glass. Gently pour the Cream over the top to ensure the layers of Rum and Cream remain separate.
- Sprinkle some Cinnamon Powder as the finishing touch.

MISTLETOE MARTINI (1 NOS)

INGREDIENTS

- 60ml Vodka
- 25ml Elderflower Liqueur/Syrup
- 50ml Cranberry Juice
- 8 c. Ice - Medium size
- 3 No's Fresh Cherries
- Sprinkles
- A Martini Glass

METHOD

- Cover the rim of the Martini glass with Sprinkles and place the glass inside the freezer for a minimum of 5 minutes.
- Add Vodka, Elderflower Liqueur/Syrup and Cranberry Juice with Ice into a cocktail shaker, shake vigorously for approximately 20 seconds and pour into the chilled Martini Glass.





VIRTICLE

BY JETWING



Reinventing Colombo's nightlife and fine dining experience, Virticle by Jetwing is among Colombo's classiest fine-dining restaurants and bars. Sitting at the rooftop of the Access Towers, Virticle offers a picturesque bird's-eye view of Colombo in all its glory. The food and beverages at Virticle are of an impeccable standard, and this space truly does embody a one-of-a-kind fine dining experience. Yet, if you plan on letting your hair down on Friday night instead, the open rooftop bar at Virticle is still the place to be!

MUST HAVE'S

- Combo Platter
- Barramundi
- Cheesecake



Scan the QR code to read the full article

KAFFI COLOMBO

In the midst of Colombo's hustle and bustle, indulge in a slice of Nordic culture at Kaffi!

Kaffi Colombo serves homemade meals, treats and an array of heavenly beverages authentic to Nordic (North European) cuisine. Located in the heart of Colombo, in the newly renovated Crescat Boulevard, it's the perfect spot to catch up on some work, studies or with friends over a cuppa or warm coffee. Beyond experiencing Kaffi's uniquely delicious menu, the serenity of this cafe is the cherry on top!



MUST HAVE'S

- Cafe Bonbom
- Sunshine Bun
- Toast Skagen

Scan the QR code to
read the full article





Trending

Senuri
Rupasi



nghe

In the span of just a couple of months, Senuri Rupasinghe has established an illustrious presence on TikTok, now becoming one of the most sought-after TikTokers in Sri Lanka! Senuri's go-getter personality led her to pursue modelling, law and content creation full-time, all of which she documents on TikTok. Yet it isn't just her daily vlogs on the app that are taking up space on everyone's For You Page. She also delights us with her parodied skits of typical Sri Lankan scenarios and the occasional fashion transition videos. We sat down with this multi-talented boss lady to have a chat about her journey as an A-list content creator and life behind-the-scenes.

1. Describe yourself in 3 words

Confident, determined, sarcastic.

2. What sparked your interest to start creating content on TikTok?

By the time I got around to making TikToks and figuring out my niche, I had a following on Instagram. My followers were always curious about how I juggled law, modelling and content creation at the same time. So the timing just felt right to jump in.

3. How do you manage your personal life and a full-time job while creating content on TikTok and other platforms?

It's tricky. With a field like law, there is little room for play because the work that I do is serious. I get to channel my inner boss there, and explore my creative side with content creation and modelling. All three of my jobs are so diverse, so it's like I get to be three different people in one day.

4. What type of content do you enjoy creating the most?

Vlogs and comedy skits on toxic friends and relatives. These also get the most engagement on TikTok so it's a win-win. With my comedy skits, I just post videos about what your everyday Sri Lankan has to deal with. Then when more people engage and say they can relate, it's fun because it's as if we're all in the same boat!

5. Do you think your younger self would believe she would grow up to be a TikToker?

No! Because I'm in three different fields that I never even dreamt of. I don't think little Senuri would even be able to fathom that part of her job is making TikToks, but I'm happy now.

6. Who are some local TikTokers you admire and look to for inspiration?

There are so many, but Eric (@ericheinrichs) is definitely at the top of the list. I also love watching Dimithri (@justmesrilankan). I love how seamlessly hilarious they are! Comedy and sarcasm just roll off their tongue. Finally there's also Stephi Herft (@stephiherftbackup), who makes interesting content about Sri Lankan unsolved crimes.

7. You've made TikToks about dealing with online hate. Do

you believe bullies should be directly confronted?

Outside an online setting, when I've dealt with bullies in my personal life, I didn't really confront them. And not confronting them really took a toll on my life. In fact for several months my life was on pause because of it. So when I encountered online hate from time to time, I stood up for myself. Directly confronting bullies is important for your own mental peace, but at the end of the day, don't do it to prove anything to anyone else. Do it for yourself.

8. Has your presence on TikTok affected your body image?

Not really, I am who I am and I don't try to hide that either. Having this mindset didn't come naturally though, I had to deal with comments about my body in my early modelling days as well. I have clients who would sometimes pick on why my weight would change from

week to week. Even though I workout six days a week my body still changes, but that's okay.

9. Do you have any tips on creating viral content on TikTok?

Other than basic tips like using trending music and following trends, I'd say stay authentic. Find what makes you unique and work on that. It took me a few months to find my niche and post consistently, but you'll get there eventually.

10. What does the future look like for Senuri Rupasinghe?

Honestly, I have no idea myself! But I'll hopefully be doing the same three jobs because I love what I do. Next year I'll be taking the Bar Exam and hopefully getting the title of Attorney-at-Law - that's one thing I'm set on. But I would like to hang on to everything for as long as I can.





"I'm in three different fields that I never even dreamt of. I don't think little Senuri would even be able to fathom that part of her job is making TikToks, but I'm happy now."

MAKINI BUSH CAMP

EXPERIENCE LUXURY IN THE HEART OF THE JUNGLE

Located just beyond the Yala National Park buffer zone, with the closest town being Kataragama, this will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience for locals and tourists alike. Since its inception in late 2020, Makini has steadily built a reputation among the luxury camping community for serving unforgettable experiences to its patrons, whilst staying true to Southern Sri Lankan heritage.

Take a look at the backstory of how this one-of-a-kind luxury bush camp came to be!

By Pahani Fernando

IT specialist and avid wildlife photographer, Chamith Kumaraage, conceptualised Makini. Before starting Makini, one of Chamith's pastimes was voluntary safari tour guiding. After some thought, it only made sense that he teams up with some of his work buddies Saneth, Chamara, Nirosch and three others to make Makini Bush camp a reality. Who would've thought the IT industry had so many wildlife enthusiasts?

Together they explained that the name 'Makini' originated

from the word for 'spider' in the Veddha language. In fact, Sri Lanka boasts the highest endemism of spiders in the world. This name also encapsulates the concept of their bush camp; a nature-centric experience for people to revel in. After all, Yala National Park is the second-largest national park in Sri Lanka, so there's so much to explore!

In terms of unique experiences, Makini has many to offer. A popular experience is the daytime guided safaris to the Yala National Park, where guests can not only get up close and personal with many wild

animals and exotic birds, but also understand the impact on the ecosystem and the habitat changes that are triggered by the behaviour of these animals. Makini also offers guided night walks, bush walks, star gazing and wildlife photography sessions for all interested guests, to ensure their senses are heightened and memorable moments are created. Beyond witnessing the grandeur of Southern Sri Lanka's dry zone, the highlight of staying at Makini is experiencing the local food and culture.

One of the ways authenticity is brought into the bush camp is through hiring the services of local folk, who have lived and embraced the Southern Sri Lankan lifestyle. Two people admired around the bush camp are the resident cook and the caretaker; a hospitable wedded pair who engage in many roles within the course of a typical day. The resident cook has received high praise from both guests and locals for her culinary skills in the kitchen. Her meals are served either in the indoor dining area that accommodates up to 20 people or in the outdoor area, which is generally set alive by a hearty bonfire. One of the caretaker's many skills, apart from his chena cultivation mastery, is catching fish in the nearby Maliththanpelessa lake, which he engages in almost every morning. Only fresh produce is used to cook delicious and nutritious meals. A mini chena cultivation equipped with unique drip irrigation is maintained by the caretaker at the bush camp premises. Here, many fruits, vegetables and legumes are cultivated, ensuring that fresh produce is available for the guests and staff alike. The rest of the staff at Makini are also known for their knowledge, friendliness and hospitality, and for taking the time to help the guests interested in learning more about the locality.

With sustainability and conservation being key pillars, Makini follows a minimalist approach. They are committed to meeting their business requirements internally for necessities such as fresh vegetables. Makini prioritises water conservation through collecting, preserving and purifying natural rainwater. They also run the site on solar-powered energy, opting only to use the generator when guests arrive.

Their uniqueness stems from the drive to provide a truly authentic Southern Sri Lankan wilderness experience, lined with luxury and immersed in a hospitable culture. Visit Makini and experience it for yourselves!



The Scarlet Letters

It's almost Christmas time again and although every year I am grateful for the potential of a fresh start in the new year, this year I don't know if the new year will bring me more burdens or less. It has been a really rough 2022 for most of us, getting used to the new status quo with the cost of living. Counting pennies is not just a saying anymore, I am actually counting pennies. Every spare rupee that I see is tucked away safely into my 'coin purse' – the one I keep especially for the bus. PickMe travel has slowly been replaced with the bus and train wherever possible. Even using a 50 rupee egg requires much consideration as it has become the main source of protein now that I have almost forgotten the taste of chicken and fish altogether. It's bleak times and even my usual optimism that has gotten me through many rough patches in the past is waning.

With my daughter about to sit for the O/L exams in a few months, we are on a sleep, eat, and study loop that only has room for past papers, tuition classes, and exams. As an all-girl unit that thrives on tasks requiring teamwork and leadership, academia was never really our strongest asset which makes this seem like a

jail sentence that we are counting the days to complete. The only jail-free card I have these days is the odd cricket match that Sri Lanka wins. They leave the fortunes of the tide swaying till the last ball so that the victory is as exciting as a day without power cuts. If you ask me, as probably one of the most diehard female fans of cricket in the country, the way Sri Lanka plays is ingrained in the threads of the fabric of our culture – dramatic, unstable, and yet a spectacularly resilient bunch. The dramatic highs of the odd outstanding catch and standout performance are scarred by the catastrophic collapses of the top players and scandalous behaviour of the rest. But the one thing we can all agree on is, no matter how far down the ranking Sri Lanka might fall, we always pick ourselves up again.

My mom and I have discovered that the supermarkets are now out of our budget for fresh vegetables and fruits. We have been loyal SPAR and Keells customers but paying more for the same old things has become stale and we have gone back to the pola where we find that the choice and quality are much better. The attractive piles of brightly coloured

veggies inspire you to think innovatively and cook some new curries. The prices on the small chits of cardboard placed on top of the fresh bundles of produce are actually much clearer than the supermarket layout too, where you don't know whether you are going to be spending 400 rupees on carrots or 600 until you hunt someone down to weigh it for you. By that time you have already put it in the bag so now it's embarrassing to take it out and put it back; so you end up spending far more than you expected. At the pola, you can see clearly that 250g of potatoes is 150 rupees so you can ask for exactly that.

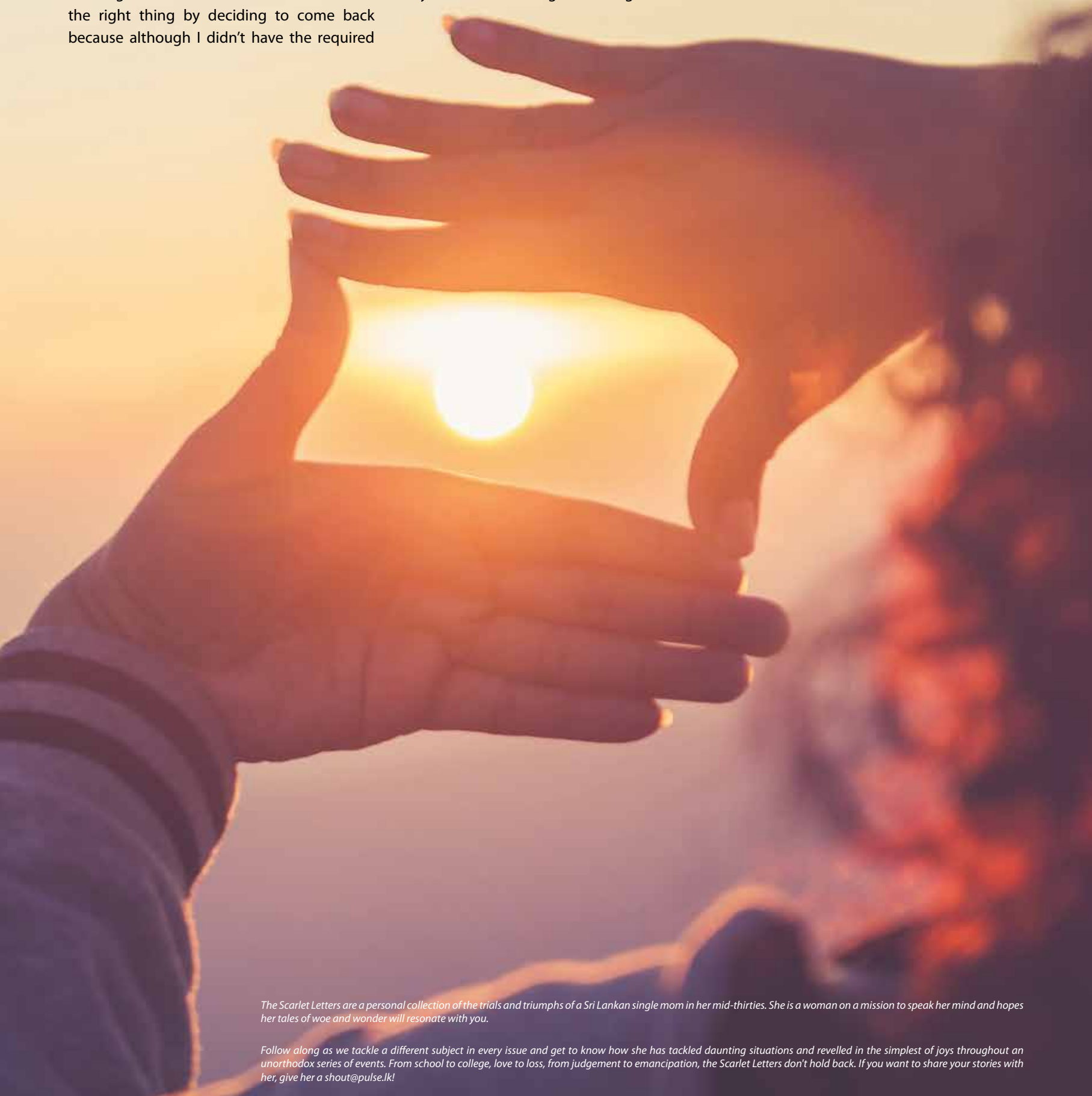
As we prepare for Christmas and my daughter's 16th birthday in December, it's funny how we never just think to cancel things and sit quietly at home lamenting the economic crisis or the political disasters that have unfolded this year. Instead, we think about how we can manage with what we have to celebrate the special occasion. With whatever means I have at the time, I know everyone will rally together to make the best of things. Even if it is a cup of tea and a ginger biscuit, it is relished and appreciated. I know if I didn't have my family

around me pushing me, I'd probably have thrown in the towel and said, "Oh well, what can we do?" But not wanting to disappoint anyone and genuinely being someone who loves to look at the brighter side of things, I am always up to trying. That's one thing I absolutely love about living in Sri Lanka. People always ask me why the hell I came back here when I lived for 10 years in the U.S. But until you leave everything and everyone who makes you what you are, you don't always realise the value of it. These days I have been thinking more and more about if I have done the right thing by deciding to come back because although I didn't have the required

visa to stay at that time, I know of so many of my college friends who were international students who have worked around it and are now still living there. My student loan which was once Rs. 60,000 per month is now Rs. 200,000 per month and it is absolutely killing me. That's the main reason I wonder if I should toss this all and think more practically about the money, and leave my daughter and go and work it out. But without anyone for support and a stable income lined up there, the obstacle I can't seem to overcome is my own fear of taking it all on again alone.

In Sri Lanka, even if things truly crash and burn, at least I have my mom, daughter, and sister who will stand with me while I pick up the pieces. We've been through hell together and I've always faced every problem thrown my way alone. I don't know that I have the juice left to keep that up.

Let's pray for a better 2023 and for things to start looking up for us all. It's our Sri Lankan spirit that nothing can kill, so let's work harder till we can recover and be kinder so we can face it together.



The Scarlet Letters are a personal collection of the trials and triumphs of a Sri Lankan single mom in her mid-thirties. She is a woman on a mission to speak her mind and hopes her tales of woe and wonder will resonate with you.

Follow along as we tackle a different subject in every issue and get to know how she has tackled daunting situations and revelled in the simplest of joys throughout an unorthodox series of events. From school to college, love to loss, from judgement to emancipation, the Scarlet Letters don't hold back. If you want to share your stories with her, give her a shout@pulse.lk!

Growing up things

THE MILLENNIAL GUIDE TO MANAGING MANAGERS

There are two types of bosses we are going to remember for the rest of our lives – the ones who always had our backs and the other ‘walking dreads’. In fact, today’s corporate stories are rife with manager-employee relationships (especially with millennials) that are either very inspiring or highly disastrous.

By Shakirah Mohamed

There has never been such a time as now, when four generations co-exist in one workplace. Just look around your workplace, and you will find a 50-something CEO who is a baby boomer (1946-1964) hunching over a set of executives that are mostly of Generation X (1965-1981) during executive meetings. The next line of managers is often a mix of Generation X and millennials (Gen Y) while a crop of interesting young Generation Z employees is already taking up internships or entry-level positions.

And, against this canvas, baby boomers are trying to better understand millennials so that they can work more effectively with their younger colleagues. On the other hand, millennials often seem to have problems understanding the boss-employee relationship, which – let’s face it – is pretty much stuck in the traditional, hierarchical model. A big NO, in our world of free will.

The only way to ensure that you get what you want out of your job, and to achieve some control over your career, is to think of your boss as a resource that you must manage correctly to achieve your career goals.

With that in mind, here’s a simple list of tips to help you navigate the challenge of managing a manager.

Be true to your word

Every boss is a little paranoid that employees won’t do what they’ve committed to doing or that they are finding shortcuts. Most bosses deal with that paranoia by micromanaging, which makes your job more difficult. If you’re being



micromanaged, it's probably because you're not managing his expectations.

Therefore, be truthful with your boss about what you can, and can't, accomplish. Whenever you tell your boss you're going to do something, follow through with it and keep them updated. Don't make promises and commitments that you can't keep, even if it feels as if your boss wants you to.

Remember the details

If aspects of your job bore you or seem menial and heavily process-oriented, remember that your boss views them as crucial. And, if your boss knows you have these tasks under control, he or she can take those items off his or her to-do list, letting you work more independently.

Show that you are keen to learn

Baby boomers have had years of experience collaborating, leading, and

problem-solving; consider all that so you can learn from them. They are also highly attuned to how to succeed in their organisations, so be sure to leverage your boss's knowledge of the systems and norms at your workplace.

Ask questions if you don't understand the underlying reasons for the guidance he or she gives. When you understand the goals, priorities, and systems in place where you work, you will be in the best position to offer your own suggestions and innovations – and contributing value to your organisation is both fulfilling and a sure path to success in your job.

Stay proactive

Once you have a clear picture of your responsibilities and priorities, suggest a system for completing your work while taking tasks off your boss's plate. Keep lines of communication open, and proactively suggest that

you have regular check-in meetings to ensure that tasks are covered and deadlines are being met.

To get up the corporate ladder, you will most likely need the nudge of your manager and his experience to see you through. No matter how well-grounded you are in your skillset or how knowledgeable you are in your field, going up in your career needs a lot more skills than you currently possess.

So guess what? You will need to manage upwards!

Good luck!



The Realist's Guide to a good night's sleep

Shortly after I turned 40, I had to accept that the memes were all highly prophetic, and while life may (or may not) have indeed begun, the deterioration of my knees, hormones, and sleeping patterns had definitely gained momentum.

The latter is particularly inconvenient. In my youth, I used to fall asleep as soon as my head hit the pillow. These days though, my least favourite inner voice has decided that bedtime is the perfect opportunity to assert herself. Our conversations go something like this:

Me (desperate for some sleep):

Inner voice: Really didn't get as much done as you should have today...

Me (feigning deafness):

Inner voice: I also don't think you handled that conversation with our eldest child particularly well. No 'Ammi points' for that one at all.

Me (pulling a pillow over my head to muffle a voice that is inside my head):

Inner voice: The last time I checked you still hadn't paid the advance for mali's birthday cake. Good luck making that Minecraft monstrosity he wants all by yourself.

Me (oh crap):

Inner voice: Oh and you didn't return our mother's call. There will be a major payback tomorrow.

Me (wide awake now and in full panic mode):

So, what do I do to calm my nerves and get the sleep I so desperately need?

- Wander into the kitchen. Open the fridge. Shake head firmly at leftover lasagna. Close fridge. Feel virtuous.
- Recall (sometimes annoying inner voice has her uses) that I didn't give our female dog her medication. Shove three pills unceremoniously down her throat. She looks understandably aggrieved.
- Drink a large glass of water.
- Decide that now is the perfect time to work on the novel I've been trying to finish for... forever.
- Type 35 words and start to nod off. Feel very indignant – what I do tonight may ensure a publishing deal – how dare I consider stopping now!
- Make a large cup of coffee while imagining my Booker acceptance speech.
- Sit down at laptop. Type 107 words.
- Feel the effect of a glass of water and cup of coffee. Rush to bathroom. Discover that nobody replaces the toilet paper except me.

- Return to laptop. Feel wired and productive. Also feel hungry.
- Open fridge. Eyeball lasagna.
- Sit at laptop. Read my 142 new words. Dislike 140 of them.
- Eat lasagna.
- Spend 5 minutes scrolling through Facebook.
- Discover that I actually spent 45 minutes scrolling through Facebook.
- Read 142 new words again. Dislike 140 of them again.
- Open freezer. Eyeball chocolate chip ice cream.
- Go into my dark, silent, lavender-scented bedroom and look at my sleeping husband. Contemplate waking him up and telling him I can't sleep. Decide to be a better person.
- Drift through kids' rooms. Recall all the times they woke me up when they couldn't sleep. Could now be the time for a lesson in karma?
- Decide against foolhardy action which will guarantee they all have to stay in and do online school tomorrow.
- Look at clock. It's almost 3 a.m.
- Start singing Matchbox 20 song of the same name and get nostalgic for the music of the 90s.
- Return to laptop. Stare at screen.

- Eat chocolate chip ice cream.
- Put on headphones. Search YouTube for 90s mix.
- Drown in nostalgia for the music of my youth, my unfulfilled potential, and most importantly my lost ability to fall asleep at the drop of a hat.
- Wake up with a start to the sound of the Goo Goo Dolls whispering in my ear.
- Drift off to bedroom. Trip over dog.
- Spend 10 minutes apologising and rubbing dog's tummy.
- Get into bed. Finally feel like I can get some sleep.
- Close my eyes.
- My 4.45 a.m. alarm goes off.
- Greet the day with a rude but entirely justifiable four-letter word.
- Listen to husband muttering sleepily – "That's no way to start the day".
- Tell him that (lucky for him) neither is murder.
- Stomp off to make coffee.





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