



COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

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INTERIOR DESIGNER



I will never be able to cast a jaded eye over Sri Lanka's natural beauty, charm, simplicity, and tropical modernist style. Despite the scrum of fancy new buildings and high rises, it's all that local Lankan loveliness that evokes a gush of adjectives.

Rustic or retro?

My two all-time recommendations remain Tintagel Colombo for a glam-boutique style stay or Lake Lodge for resort chic easiness.

Coffee or cocktails?

Colombo's first speakeasy bar, Baillie Street Merchants, is just the place to sip on a Lolita and go OTT on delicious small plates. If you are more of a coffeeholic, the newly-opened Plus Nine Four by the famed Café Kumbuk team is a must-try; I love their acharu juice inspired by Sri Lankan pickle though a casual healthy breakfast here is just as good. Check out the Japanese-inspired KIKU. I love their sandwiches

and cucumber salad with miso. Even though coffee rarely excites me, I find their turmeric, charcoal and beetroot lattes worth a repeat alongside a sampling of freshly baked donuts with matcha and beetroot glaze. For the end-of-the-day nightcap, Fern, a new bar located above a little flower shop, offers an interesting mix of cocktails and live music.

Ministry Of Crab, then what?

Don't miss a good Sri Lankan breakfast—the one at Sugar Bistro And Wine Bar is outstanding (don't leave before trying their signature crab kotu). For Lamprais (a Sri Lankan Burgher rice dish), go to the VOC Café at the Dutch Burgher Union. The wickedly dark Black Pork Curry, one of the star items at the Gallery Café, is made from my grandmother's recipe. Pig out, I say.

After Paradise Road, head here

Our store, Paradise Road has been a

staple for most tourists. But there are several multi-brand local designer boutiques to visit too—PR, The Design Collective, Trunk, Urban Island and studio stores like Sonali Dharmawardena and Buddhi Batiks.

Learn from the locals

Enrol with Sonali Dharmawardena (dharmawardenasonali@gmail.com) for a personal workshop on the art of batik or go on a Colombo City Walk with Mark Forbes ([@colombocitywalks](https://www.instagram.com/colombocitywalks)). ■



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