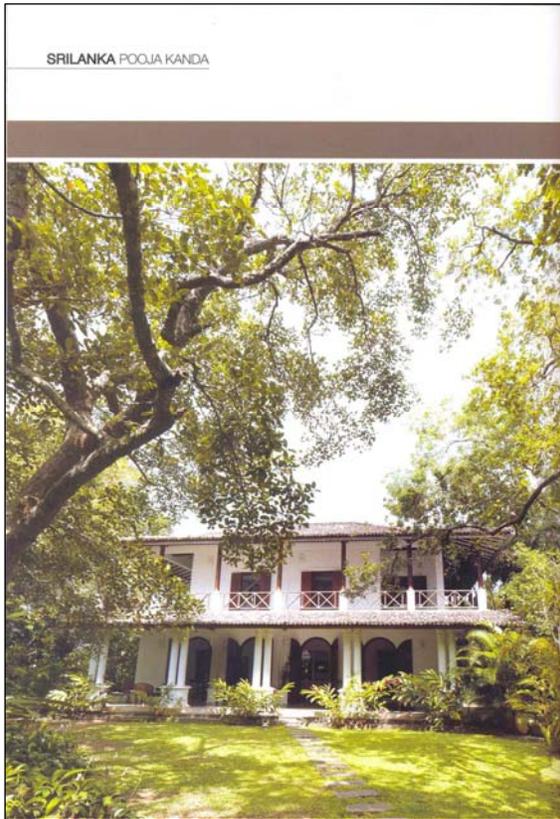
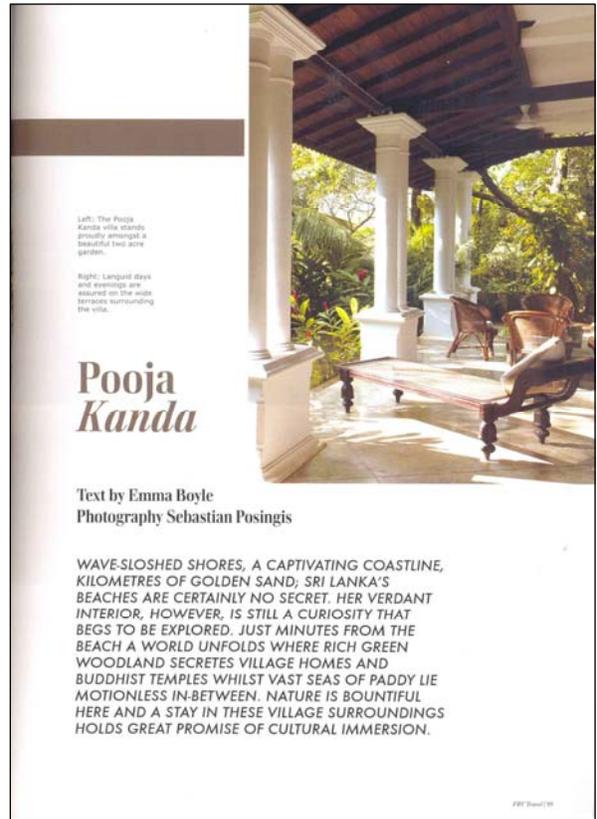


FRV TRAVEL – POOJA KANDA

Edition 7.5 Feb – Mar 2011



SRILANKA POOJA KANDA



Left: The Pooja Kanda villa stands proudly amongst a beautiful two-acre garden.

Right: Langkat-style and examples are featured on the walls here, surrounding the villa.

Pooja Kanda

Text by Emma Boyle
Photography Sebastian Posings

WAVE-SLOSHED SHORES, A CAPTIVATING COASTLINE, KILOMETRES OF GOLDEN SAND; SRI LANKA'S BEACHES ARE CERTAINLY NO SECRET. HER VERDANT INTERIOR, HOWEVER, IS STILL A CURIOSITY THAT BEGS TO BE EXPLORED. JUST MINUTES FROM THE BEACH A WORLD UNFOLDS WHERE RICH GREEN WOODLAND SECRETES VILLAGE HOMES AND BUDDHIST TEMPLES WHILST VAST SEAS OF PADDY LIE MOTIONLESS IN-BETWEEN. NATURE IS BOUNTIFUL HERE AND A STAY IN THESE VILLAGE SURROUNDINGS HOLDS GREAT PROMISE OF CULTURAL IMMERSION.

FRV Travel



Sri Lanka's leafy rural hinterland is sprinkled with ancient *maligams* – mason houses originally inhabited by chieftains – that sit in prominent positions within villages, still with large gardens and stunning views. Although the design was originally based on rubber plantations, or more permanent, versions of traditional village homes, the influence of the European colonialists in Sri Lanka, and chiefly the Dutch, also played a major role: their stately architectural designs were often copied for the prominent features that proved practical in the tropical climate.

Pooja Kanda, although a relatively new construction, was built to resemble an ancient *maligam*, and showcases many of the Dutch colonialists' most influential architectural details, including deep pillared verandas, high ceilings and open-air courtyards, as well as a large reservoir garden. In Sri Lanka, *pooja kanda* means sacred hill, and as it stands proudly atop a private wooded hillside near Galle where fruit trees, flowering shrubs, coconut palms, hardwood timber and enticing views prosper, it's hard not to feel blessed by surroundings so secluded and serene. Furnished terraces on two floors of this five-bedroom villa gaze benevolently out into this theatre of a garden where characters emerge by the

minutes; monitor lizards stoically safeguard the ground level perimeter whilst turquoise scapiger fox coveys as they leave the open spaces of the soft green lawn. Melancholy cries of parakeets slice through a chirruping chorus of squirrels, monkeys swing steadily between densely leafed trees, and bats, seemingly hidden, suddenly awaken at dusk as they dive into the darkening sky.

Views of the garden are celebrated as generously from Pooja's tastefully decorated interior; on the ground floor an open plan living and dining room gaze at the garden through high arched doors whilst an air-conditioned TV room languishes next door. Bedrooms are on two floors and open directly onto a wraparound balcony that leads over a footbridge to the pinnacle of a rocky outcrop flanking one side of the house. From here, a stone staircase descends the rock face to a shadow-flecked swimming pool lying amongst tangled greenery below.

THE VILLA WAS BUILT TO RESEMBLE AN ANCIENT WALAUWA AND SHOWCASES MANY OF THE DUTCH COLONIALISTS' MOST INFLUENTIAL ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS.

Above: The living room looks out over the garden through high arched doors.

Above right: The master bedroom with four-poster bed.

Right: The large bathroom, again in elegant white.



From wherever you are in the house, signs of life gently drift up on the breeze from the village below. "mala mala" cry the fish sellers hawking their catch as the bicycle bells of the postmen tinkle and the whistling rattle of the local van attracts the attention of passers by. A wander down the stone-speckled driveway into the village so discover it first-hand is the only way to experience this phenomenon completely as Pooja's location means that it's easy to get out and explore.

There's a lot more to do around Pooja Kanda beyond what's possible on foot. Discover the nearby Koggala Lagoon's beautiful waterways, islands and spice gardens by traditional *catamarans*, visit a turlic hatchery on land off on an adventure by mountain bike ending up with a sunset dip in the sea; beaches are within a five to ten minute drive. Further a field is the famous UNESCO heritage fort of Galle. Atriona for whale and dolphin watching and Tritigala for everything to do with sea.

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Pooja Kanda

Text by Emma Boyle

Photography Sebastian Posingis

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Sri Lanka's leafy rural hinterland is sprinkled with ancient *walauwas* — manor houses originally inhabited by chieftains — that sit in prominent positions within villages, still with large gardens and stunning views. Although the design was originally based on rather grander, or more permanent, versions of traditional village homes, the influence of the European colonialists in Sri Lanka, and chiefly the Dutch, also played a major role; their stately architectural designs were often copied for the prominent features that proved practical in the tropical climate.

Pooja Kanda, although a relatively new construction, was built to resemble an ancient *walauwa*, and showcases many of the Dutch colonialists' most influential architectural details, including deep pillared verandas, high ceilings and open-air courtyards, as well as a large two-acre garden. In Sinhalese, *pooja kanda* means sacred hill, and as it stands proudly atop a private wooded hillock near Galle where fruit trees, flowering shrubs, coconut palms, hardwood timber and creeping vines prosper, it's hard not to feel blessed by surroundings so secluded and serene. Furnished terraces on two floors of this five-bedroom villa gaze benevolently out into this theatre of a garden where characters emerge by the minute; monitor lizards slothfully safeguard the ground level perimeter whilst mongoose scamper for cover as they brave the open spaces of the soft green lawn. Melancholy cries of peacocks slice through a chirruping chorus of squirrels, monkeys swing stealthily between densely leafed trees, and bats, seemingly hidden, suddenly awoken at dusk as they dive into the darkening sky.

Views of the garden are celebrated as generously from Pooja's tastefully decorated interior; on the ground floor an open plan living and dining room gazes at the garden through high arched doors whilst an air-conditioned TV room languishes next door. Bedrooms are on two floors and open directly onto a wraparound balcony that leads over a footbridge to the pinnacle of a rocky outcrop flanking one side of the house. From here, a stone staircase descends the rock face to a shadow-flecked swimming pool lying amongst tangled greenery below.

From wherever you are in the house, signs of life gently drift up on the breeze from the village below; "*malu malu!*" cry the fish sellers hawking their catch as the bicycle bells of the postmen tinkle and the whistling tune of the bread van attracts the attention of passers by. A wander down the stone-speckled driveway into the village to discover it first-hand is the only way to experience this phenomenon completely as Pooja's location means that it's easy to get out and explore.

There's a load more to do around Pooja Kanda beyond what's possible on foot. Discover the nearby Koggala Lagoon's beautiful waterways, islands and spice gardens by traditional catamaran, visit a turtle hatchery or head off on an adventure by mountain bike ending up with a sunset dip in the sea; beaches are within a five to ten minute drive. Further afield is the famous UNESCO heritage fort of Galle, Mirissa for whale and dolphin watching and Titigala for everything to do with tea.