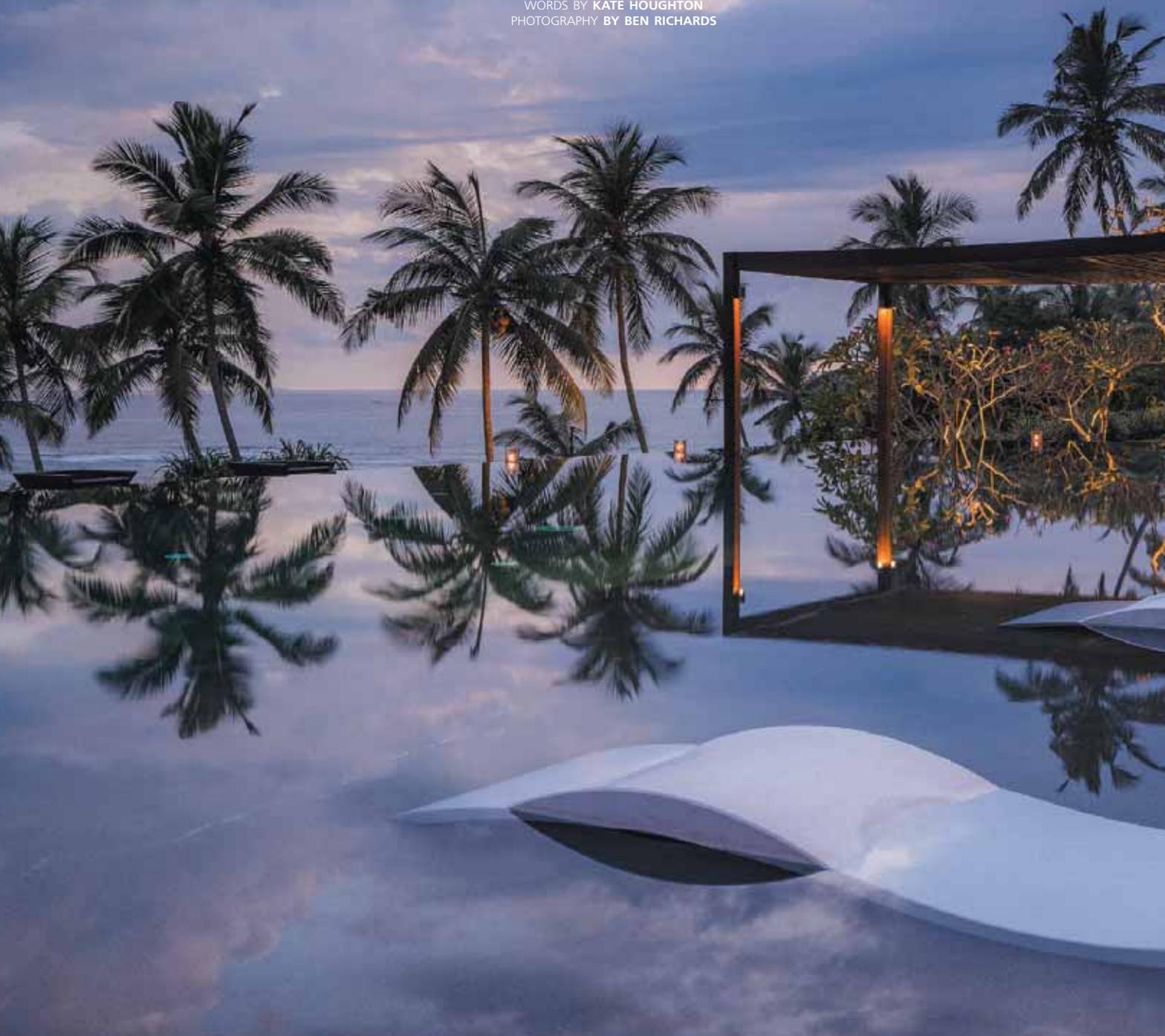


FROM SRI LANKA *with* LOVE

Wrap yourself in the ultimate luxury that is Àni Sri Lanka,
a private resort with one single aim – making your day, every day

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If, for you, luxury travel means towering hotels, glossy restaurants, and access to high-end designer boutiques, avoid Àni Sri Lanka at all costs. Alternatively, if for you luxury means the slowing of time, breathtakingly beautiful surroundings, a sense of being wholly, sincerely looked after, and perhaps the opportunity to give a little back to the community who have welcomed you in, then Àni Sri Lanka is the ultimate luxury travel experience.

The joy begins the moment you stagger down the walkway from the plane, when you are met with a beaming smile and a warm welcome from a member of the Àni Sri Lanka team, ready to usher you past the usual queues though passport control, settle you in a smart lounge and head off to find your bags for you. Seriously, this is the only way I am prepared to travel going forward.

Once all that was sorted, I was taken through a specially unlocked back door to the airport and into an air-conditioned car, with just a brief blast of the hot tropical air to advise me I had arrived where I sought to be.

Before commencing the three-hour drive to the resort, which lies on the southern tip of the island, I first enjoyed a stopover at The Wallawwa, one of the tiny group of Teardrop Hotels, found only in Sri Lanka. Just 15 minutes from the airport, this 18-bedroom boutique hotel in a converted 18th-century manor house is set in lush tropical gardens with a secluded swimming pool.

After a lengthy stretch on a long-haul flight, taking some time to lounge about, sip a cocktail and wonder about the exotic bird sounds cascading from the surrounding foliage was just what was needed. A lazy supper followed by a sound night's sleep ensured I was jet lag-free and ready to go.

The joy of a stay at any of the four exclusive Àni Resorts (you can also find them

in Thailand, the Dominican Republic and Anguilla) is that you can spend your day any way you choose, all planned and executed (quite beautifully) by the Àni team.

Wanting to discover a little of the island, my fellow Àni guests and I were whisked off in air-conditioned luxury to Galle, a small fishing town around two hours away, where we enjoyed a long lunch at Fort Bazaar Galle, another Teardrop Hotels delight, before wandering the local shops, picking up bits and bobs to take home with us.

From designer fashions to traditional woodcarvings, tourist tat to an entire shop dedicated to vintage travel posters, you can browse or buy, wandering in and out of tiny premises and not an air-conditioned mall in sight. Bliss.

At last, the bit we'd been waiting for. We arrived in Dickwella, the location of Àni Sri Lanka. A meet and greet by almost the entire Àni team, offering chilled clothes, chilled drinks and warm smiles gives but a hint of the pleasures that lie ahead.

Àni Resorts is the world's first private resort collection and consists of four hyper-luxury resorts where guests have exclusive use.

In Sri Lanka there are 15 villas, and a minimum of six must be booked, but then the whole resort becomes yours; a tropical ➔

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home from home for the very wealthy, a place to blow your children's inheritance on a family celebration that will last long in the memories or, indeed, the most luxurious of retreats for corporate getaways guaranteed to ensure loyalty.

Talking to the Àni staff guests have ranged from Saudi royals on a jaunt to a four-generation British family uniting for the holiday of a lifetime.

While there, you can laze and lounge and graze on gourmet foods and made-to-order cocktails to your heart's content, never needing to leave the resort. Simply progress from breakfast to poolside (or indeed in-pool) loungers to evening meal, or even choose to indulge in up to 15 spa treatments every day you are there.

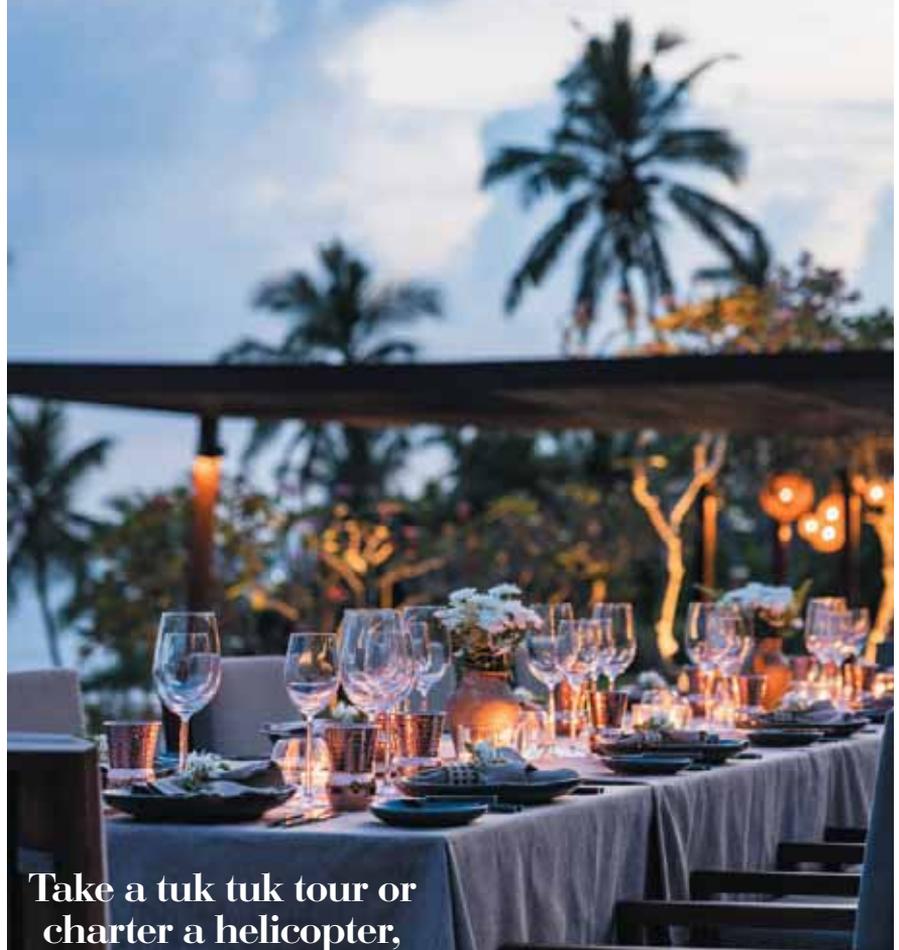
Choose a traditional Ayurvedic massage or facial, or a deep-tissue sports massage, or even the exotic Shirodhara, a classic Ayurvedic procedure of slowly and steadily dripping medicated oil on the forehead. I opted for Ayurvedic massage and oh my, nirvana can be achieved in a spa in Sri Lanka.

If getting out and about is your wish, this can be arranged too. Walk along the beach to a tiny Buddhist temple and receive a blessing from the priest, or visit the nearby Big Buddha and immerse yourself in an ancient religion.

Head to the local markets with chef Cyril, then watch him knock up a coconut chicken curry in just 15 minutes. Take a tuk tuk tour or charter a helicopter, take a safari in the jungle or ocean. Sri Lanka is your oyster and Àni are ready to open it up for you.

It's very easy, when travelling at the highest end, to forget that other people exist, especially in a place like Àni, where really and truly it is all about you. You could step from your plane and into the resort without meeting anybody not paid to be there. And this is your prerogative, of course, but in locales such as this, poverty levels often run high, and especially so since the financial crash Sri Lanka experienced in 2019.

What makes Àni so extra, extra special is the commitment to the community they draw



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their staff from, and in which their jewel of a resort sits.

At each Àni Resort, founder Tim Reynolds has also founded a non-profit Àni Art Academy, an art school designed to help local students develop painting skills as a future source of income.

The schools are free for students, with all teaching and materials supplied, and a daily lunch, too. You can visit the academy and even commission a piece by one of the students, who receives 100 per cent of the fee.

As well as supporting the arts, Àni has committed to paying the fees for a number of students at a local training college, gaining qualifications in everything from nursery nurse to plumber, who with the recent withdrawal of government funding would have been unable to afford to go.

On top of this, Àni is building a college to train low-income students, for free, in languages and computer skills, giving them access to a job market otherwise unattainable.

It's a demonstration of engagement with the community other high-profile brands might learn from, and wouldn't be possible without you.

A stay at Àni is to fall in love. With the island, with the people, with the culture and, most of all, with an experience that will leave you yearning to do it all again. Forever.

aniprivate resorts.com/ani-sri-lanka



Luxury all-inclusive rates start from \$13,000 for a minimum of five nights and include all activities listed above. Terms and conditions apply. For reservations, please contact: reservations@aniprivate resorts.com