

# Open House Colombo goes to Bentota: Gardens and Green Spaces

**Sunday, 23 July 2023**

<b>Boutique 87</b>	<b>10 a.m. – 1 p.m.</b>
<b>Lunuganga, Number 5</b>	<b>10 a.m. – 4 p.m.</b>
<b>Heritage Ayurveda, Brief Garden</b>	<b>1 p.m. – 4 p.m.</b>
<small>OPTIONAL</small>	
<b>Bentota River Mangrove boat tours with Cinnamon Nature Trails, Cinnamon Bentota Beach</b>	<b>8.30 a.m. – 5 p.m.</b>

## Shuttle bus schedule;

**8 a.m.** | Colombo to Boutique 87

**11 a.m.** | Boutique 87 to Lunuganga

**1 p.m.** | Lunuganga to Heritage Ayurveda

**2.30 p.m.** | Heritage Ayurveda to Brief Garden

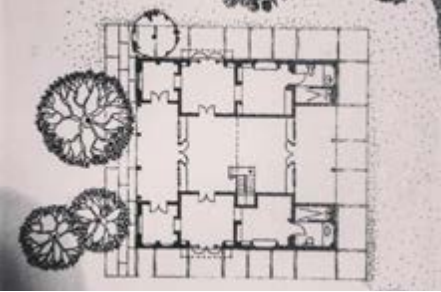
**4.30 p.m.** | Brief Garden to Colombo

(limited spaces available, please contact Shanika  
to reserve your seat: [programmes@gbtrust.net](mailto:programmes@gbtrust.net))



### 10 a.m. – 1 p.m

Artist Lydia Duchini purchased two 17<sup>th</sup> century houses on either side of the Galle Road, one of which was used as an exhibition space for her sculptures. Geoffrey Bawa remodelled both houses for Lydia in the late 70's. The house on the east side was situated at the edge of a large garden overlooking mangrove swamp. Geoffrey demolished the house on the opposite side of the Galle Road and rebuilt it within this garden. Lydia would cook for Geoffrey and his students while they took down the building brick by brick and moved it across the road. The duo put imprints of the breadfruit tree on the garden steps, a practice first started by Geoffrey's brother Bevis, at his garden Brief, and carried on by Geoffrey in many of his projects. Over the years, Lydia would make several sculptures for Geoffrey, including a leopard which sits at the water gate at Lunuganga.



### No. 87, NKA Boutique 87 (1978)

[Galle Road, Bentota](#)

**Architect:** Geoffrey Bawa

**Client:** Lydia Duchini

Instagram: @boutiquehotelsandvillas

[→ Further reading](#)



### 10 a.m. – 4 p.m

From the onset, Bawa was intent on finding a land with a connection to the water and on the eve of Sri Lanka's independence from British colonial rule he found Lunuganga. In January 1948 he purchased the neglected rubber plantation in Bentota, on Sri Lanka's south coast, with absolute conviction that it could be transformed as he envisioned.

### Lunuganga (1948 – 2003)

[Dedduwa, Bentota](#)

**Architect:** Geoffrey Bawa

Instagram: @lunugangatrust

[→ Further reading](#)

The salty water of the lake, which is actually a lagoon branching from the Bentota River, explains Bawa's name for the garden; "lunu-ganga" or "salt-river". Through intentional clearing and shifting of earth on the land Bawa was able to provide a glimpse of the water at the far end of the property which was amplified by leaving a single Moonamal tree with a large antique Chinese jar whose silhouette catches the eye as it sweeps over the hill towards the southern horizon.

Bawa continued to shape and change Lunuganga until the very end of his practice; when he was taken ill and immobile. In fact, he continued to spend time in the gardens even in the final stages of his life; and the soothing qualities of the place prevails even today. The shifts in light and wind as the days and seasons progress create subtle and monumental changes to the atmosphere; a space ever changing and yet its peace ever present and unmoving.



### **Number 5 – Ena de Silva house**

(1960–62)

[Dedduwa, Bentota](#)

**Architect:** Geoffrey Bawa

**Client:** Ena and Osmund de Silva

**Instagram:** @lunugangatrust

[→ Further reading](#)

### **10 a.m. – 4 p.m**

In 1962 Ena de Silva and her husband Osmund commissioned Geoffrey Bawa to design their home in a modest plot in the heart of Colombo. Bawa's design negotiated the increasing urbanity of the site with an introspective design which was both radically modern and drew inspiration from traditional architectural tropes in Sri Lanka, like the central courtyard. The success of the design makes the house a pivotal project in Bawa's career. It was also the beginning of a deep friendship between Ena and her architect.

In 2009 when Ena wished to sell the land the house was built on, the Lunuganga Trust worked with a team of architects, archaeologists and engineers to carefully disassemble the house and rebuild it stone by stone at Lunuganga, where it stands today.



### **The Neptune Hotel KNA**

**Heritage Ayurveda** (1973–76)

[Beruwela 12070](#)

**Architect:** Geoffrey Bawa

**Instagram:** @lunugangatrust

**Client:** Hotels Corporation

[→ Further reading](#)

### **1 p.m. – 4 p.m.**

The hotel was designed to showcase the ocean view and bring nature into the interior. The reception area of the hotel was raised to first floor level so that visitors had an elevated view over the pool area towards the ocean. The main restaurant was located beneath the terrace, beside the pool. To form the ramp to the first floor, earth was excavated from the entry court. The resultant pit was flooded to create a large wildlife pond. Hotel bedrooms are arranged on two levels on either side of the pool area, with balconies angled for views of the ocean. Anura Ratnavibushana was the project architect and the design reveals a sculptural plasticity which often characterised his work. The Neptune Hotel was adorned with commissioned pieces of art such as a series of plaster reliefs depicting palms and vines for the reception and custom murals for the bedrooms by renowned artist Laki Senanayake.

As of 2010, the space has been refurbished and converted into an Ayurveda resort with additional buildings for Ayurvedic treatments under the direction of Vinod Jayasinghe. Heritage Ayurveda has sustainability projects for solar energy, water heating and ground and grey water management. Additionally, they compost and cultivate fruit and vegetables.



**Brief Garden** (1929–92)

[Kalawila Village, Beruwala](#)

**Landscape Architect:** Bevis Bawa

**Instagram:** @briefgarden

[→ Further reading](#)

**1 p.m. – 4 p.m.**

*So he fashioned a baronial scene  
of verdurous tropical green  
with thickets and orchids and ponds  
among highly exotic fronds,  
tiled crannies of moss and fern  
odd statues at every turn  
and even a bold bas-relief  
by the talented Bawa of Brief.*

Poem excerpt by James Broughton (1980) from Sansoni, Dominic and Robson, David "Bawa, The Sri Lankan Gardens" Thames & Hudson (2008): 48.

The home and garden of Bevis Bawa is a reflection of his style, life and values and still emanates that spirit and vivaciousness in all its courtyards, patios, loggias and terraces. The house is both welcoming and refreshing, extending the tranquillity of the nature outside indoors whilst enticing the senses with eclectic decor and furniture; with collections from across the world acquired along his travels. Most notable however, are the surrounding gardens; where all roads lead home but with nooks and niches along the path that offer respite and insight into the creation of the gardens. The combinations of trees, shrubs, potted plants and sculptures reflect the moods and aesthetics that grew and expanded over 40 years and still offer a sense of serenity and intrigue.

Since his demise in 1992, Brief has been maintained by its current owner and Bevis's former assistant and landscapist, Dooland de Silva.



**Bentota river mangrove** boat  
tours with Cinnamon Nature Trails,  
Cinnamon Bentota Beach

[→ Further reading](#)

**8.30 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

Mangroves are magnificent species of spindly plants adapted to living in salty waters of lagoons, estuaries and sheltered bays along the coasts. It thrives against the odds of weather and tides and offers refuge and food to a diversity of mammals, reptiles, birds, fish and crustaceans. Further, its root structures act as natural barriers against cyclones, tidal surges and tsunamis, in spite of occupying less than 1 percent of Sri Lanka's total land. However, mangroves world over are under threat from human activity, the species in the Bentota estuary suffer from deforestation due to cutting saplings for firewood and to gain deeper access to the forests.

Operating hours: 8.30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

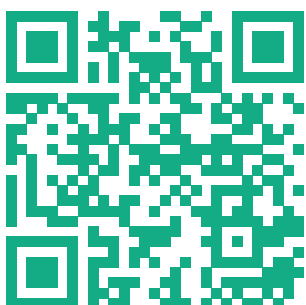
30 minute boat tour (LKR 7,000 per boat)

1 hour boat tour (LKR 10,500 per boat)

2 hour boat tour (LKR 16,000 per boat)

Maximum of 6 people per boat. To reserve a tour, please contact travel.  
cbb@cinnamonhotels.com (email) 0342275177 (Help desk) 0701254948  
(Naturalist)

We hope you enjoy the programme! Please take the time to fill out a short survey on the impact of OHC:



If you would like to give feedback on the overall To Lunuganga programme, please fill out this feedback form:

