



One of Arlene's gorgeous Caladiums

Halgolla Plantation Home

Accommodation of a different kind

- January 2014 -

Another year has drawn to its close and, as always, it's proven to be a bit of a mixed bag with elements of the proverbial "good, bad and the ugly," with the first overwhelmingly outnumbering the latter two!

December saw what has become our traditional celebration — the Christmas party for our workers and their extended families, children, parents and grandparents! Suffice it to say that a good time was had by all, with scrumptious eats, drinks, and gifts for everyone, a few party games, and plenty of music and dancing with everyone taking the floor. They all enjoyed themselves thoroughly!



Padma and Mallika at the Staff Christmas party

December brought with it a return to what used to be the usual in weather, a little damp but very pleasantly cool and there is a realistic expectation that this will continue for the early months of 2014.

As this Newsletter is being written, we are installing rustic seats at the Soaking Pool and similar "picnic tables" both there and in the lower part of our home garden. We also expect to have the piped water supply to the butterfly garden and its environs complete before year's end.

Our Vanilla vines are beginning to blossom relatively freely and Mallika, whose primary function is serving our guests, has become the primary supervisor of work associated with the maintenance of that plot, with an emphasis on hand-

pollination of the flowers, something that has to be done (successfully) if any vanilla "beans" are to be harvested.

We hope, also, to begin harvesting the first Cinnamon quills in the new year. Our guests, in addition to the complimentary bag of HPH Goodies, can now purchase small quantities of the spice crops we already grow at HPH—cloves, pepper and nutmeg, and, in the not too distant future, vanilla and cinnamon quills.



Mallika hand-pollinating vanilla flowers

Starting in 2014, we will be offering day excursions to the ruins of some of Sri Lanka's lesser-known capital cities such as Panduwasnuwara and Dambadeniya, non-intrusive visits to local Buddhist temples of significance, and visits to weekly village fairs that might be on at the time of our guests' sojourn at HPH. We believe that such experiences will give our guests a more realistic sense of the fundamental nature of Sri Lanka and its people. We will also offer a morning's excursion to Sri Lanka's top Butterfly Garden and the working coconut plantation in which it is located!

Our biggest ‘good’ however, has been to be named as [Top Home Stay](#) in Sri Lanka for 2013! The esteemed travel writer and pioneer ‘beat’ poet, Royston Ellis, has compiled the list based on his own experiences and those of his many readers. Full disclosure—Royston is a good friend so he may be somewhat biased but he has travelled all over the world and has stayed in more places than I could ever count. He has experienced the best of the best, so a recommendation from him is a real honour.

Come and see what the fuss is all about!

Warm wishes!
Arlene & Emil

For the month of January, each visiting group will receive what has become a trademark of HPH hospitality, the complimentary “Surprise Basket” of HPH “goodies”
In addition
All bookings in January qualify for our 20% discount on the fourth day of any four-day booking!



Stained glass window over the front door circa 1890.*

The following is the first of a continuing series on suggested day trips from HPH to lesser-known places of interest

Panduwasnuwara: Ancient capital of Sri Lanka

Panduwasnuwara was established by King Parakramabahu in the 12th century as a temporary capital. The area encompasses 20 hectares with scattered ruins from that time. Archeological work is still ongoing. Some of the ruins can be seen on the north side of the main Chilaw-Wariyapola road. To see the rest, turn south into the road that runs by the museum but be sure to stop in there to see some items of interest.

A six meter wide moat with the ruins of a very wide fortified wall surrounds part of the site, which contains the remnants of a royal palace as well as religious structures. The royal palace consists of two interconnected areas with ponds and even an ancient toilet. Ruins of stupas, image houses, assembly halls and quarters for the Buddhist monks can also be seen.

If you follow the road to the back, there is a functioning temple. Outside of it is an old structure, a temple meeting

place that has architectural features common to Chinese temples.

As well as the archeological sites, the area is home to several species of birds, butterflies and dragonflies. It is a peaceful place, little visited.



Ruins of the Royal Palace at Panduwasnuwara

Nearby is Panda Wewa, which is believed to be the first ever irrigation reservoir established in Sri Lanka though it is no longer functional. Only the bund remains, with homesteads on both sides.

Panduwasnuwara is about one and one-half hours from HPH and affords a pleasant day trip into the plains of the ‘coconut triangle’. If we have an indication of interest in advance of a guest’s arrival, we could make the necessary arrangements for them to explore the ruins and nature of this little-known site.

HPH rated as [Best Home Stay](#) for 2013.

HPH is highly recommended on Trip Advisor. See what our previous [guests](#) have had to say!



TripAdvisor Mobile and Tablet Apps

We are also on [Facebook](#) & [Airbnb](#)

Sri Lanka – rated as a top tourist destination for 2011, 2012 & 2013.

**[The Lonely Planet](#)
[Condé Nast Traveller](#)
[The New York Times](#)
[National Geographic](#)**

* The full story of this beautiful stained glass window will appear in February’s newsletter!

For information or to book your accommodation, check our website www.halgollaplantationhome.com or contact Emil van der Poorten: emil@halgollaplantationhome.com or by phone: 94-77-347-0702 or 94-72-284-9770