

Eagles' Golf Links – Sri Lanka's Newest



When a swing is made and the ball has come to rest 100 yards from the front of the green, your instincts may cry out to reach for a 7 iron or lower club, but the caddie knows better. He hands you the pitching wedge.

It's not that he dislikes your use of the iron. It's just that this is the smart way to play the tight lies and big greens of Sri Lanka's newest and toughest golf course – Eagles' Golf Links (EGL); the way I chose to spend my Christmas vacation and dawning of 2013.

“This course challenges the seasoned golfer with its unexpected twists and turns,” says Harsha Abeywickrema, Commander of the Sri Lankan Air Force and co-designer of the course, which is located in the environs of China Bay, Trincomalee also known as Clappenburg.

Bordered by intermittent lagoons lining the periphery of the bay, the 171 – acre golf course provides a picturesque setting with breathtaking views from almost all points of the course and the sprawling lawns which merge seamlessly with the bay.

The golf course itself is surrounded by Marble beach, known internationally for its tranquil, crystal clear water and golden sand. It provides the ideal setting for a relaxing dip after a day on the course.

In recent times, these historic waters have turned to mellow conquests. Having realised the need for a golf course in Sri Lanka that challenges the most experienced of players, Air Marshal Abeywickrema set plans in motion two years ago following the denouement of the Sri Lankan Civil War. “It was a long-term vision to bring the standards of the Sri Lankan Air Force up to par with other military establishments around the world who have had their own signature golf courses along the years,” says Mr. Abeywickrema. “We have managed to make this vision a reality through the collective efforts of 275 Air Force personnel who were instrumental in the development of the course”, he continues.

Fervour has gripped this island nation as the Asian century dawns. Its strategic location on the busiest trade route in the world has resulted in a booming economy and rapid development. This golf course is one of multiple ventures, designed to capture this prosperity.

The eighteenth hole was an extraordinary climax to a testing course. The tee off was surrounded by a 23 meter deep water hazard as it enveloped the 5 par hole, with splendid rolling greens, intolerant bunkers, treacherous rough and a crocodile pond. Unforgiving to the slightest miscalculation of distance or trajectory, this was the ultimate test of skill and mental resolve for the seasoned golfer. Focusing on the things you can control, like the next shot, is always the best approach.

Sampling a refreshing king coconut after a roller coaster 18 holes in 27 degrees worth of sunshine, the greater context of the course becomes apparent. Bordering on the world's second largest natural harbour and the largest harbour in Asia; China Bay was the stepping stone for the British East India company's dominance of the bustling and lucrative Asian trade routes. In fact, the surrounding bay was of key strategic value during the Second World War and at one point sheltered the entire Asian fleet of the British army. With the conclusion of the two-decade-long civil war, the area is in the midst of an economic and social renaissance.

If you do decide to try out this course, be prepared for some serious pampering and luxurious services ranging from a therapeutic head and body massage to exotic Sri Lankan food fulfilling your utmost gastronomical desires prepared by the EGL club house restaurant.

For individuals wanting the ultimate golfing experience wherever you are in Sri Lanka, a chauffeur driven service is provided to get to the closest airport where you would be flown straight to Trincomalee and then lodged in a beautiful Chalet facing the golf course; all part of the Ardent Golfer's package worth £350 per person per week.

So, why not pack your bags and prepare for an unforgettable golfing experience that would truly make you spread your wings at Eagles' Golf Links?