

{NOVEL}

# HIDDEN AMIDST THE BAY OF KUCHCHAVELI

A secluded world within the jungle, this unique resort drew upon its natural environment to develop a novel concept that is truly remarkable.

*By Udeshi Amarasinghe*







Uga Jungle Beach is a property of Uga Escapes, the leisure arm of FincoHoldings. Situated in the Eastern Coast of Trincomalee, this resort is the first of its kind in Kuchchaveli and a member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World. The location was selected so that the property would have a maximum beach front as well as a good view of the saltern lagoon from the side of the main road. The resort is unique in that it has utilised the highly dense medium-size scrub jungle and trees into its design.

Shrubs and the undergrowth were removed only wherever deemed necessary as such the view of the property from the beach and the access road is only shrubs and dense jungle with the occasional roof. During the construction of this resort not one of the 180 trees were cut and the buildings were constructed around the trees or by incorporating them as the main element. The idea was not to make the roofs very visible, therefore the roof was maintained at the level of the vegetation. Today, there are more than 2,000 trees on the property.

From the entrance pavilion an impressive wooden ramp takes you to the reception area, where a large tree has been incorporated into the structure. The deck at the top provides a glimpse of the well manicured lawn below and a hint of the blue ocean ahead. The dining room is downstairs. While the reception/lounge and ramp have been made using wood and coir, the dining area is simple with its cement finish and clean lines. The entire property has a rustic, natural and open feel while providing absolute comfort to the guests.





Jungle Beach is a 48-key property and the rooms are in the form of individual cabins. These are categorised as Lagoon, Jungle, Beach and Cluster according to the view and surroundings. However, the beach is not visible to the Beach cabins as there is shrub jungle surrounding the cabin, instead there are private pathways from the cabin to the beach. As its name says, Jungle cabins are surrounded by lush greenery, and the Lagoon cabins face the lagoons, with the greenery of the natural surrounding creating a picturesque setting. The ambience of seclusion created by this unique concept gives the feeling as though one is living within the jungle. The interiors of the cabins are somewhat similar with green and blue upholstery and cushions giving a splash of colour to the aesthetic timber furniture and white walls.

The Cluster is a secluded area with three cabins and a central pool. Here, the colour of the cushions are orange, giving the cabins in the Cluster a slight difference from the rest. Except for the Lagoon cabins, the Jungle, Beach and Cluster cabins have open air bathrooms. The shower is literally outside the building. All structures of cabins as well as any walls throughout the resort were built using Durra board, which is an environmentally-friendly material packed with compressed hay, which is the reason as to why the rooms are cool during the day. Protecting the



(Opposite page)  
The view from the Beach cabin  
This picture: looking into one of the Cluster cabins  
Below: interior of a Cluster room



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The pool during the night





environment has been a key factor when building the resort and as such this is reflected throughout the property. Recycled material such as cut off timber from the roof has been used for certain floors and the ramp has been built with timber from old buildings. The roof is made of dried iluk, which heightens the natural feel of the premises but also cools the cabins.

There are no walls in the common areas at Jungle Beach, just as the dining room, the main bar too is housed in a structure without any walls but surrounded with ponds that cool the premises. The central pool creates a picturesque setting with the pond with lotus flowers almost seemingly one with the pool. A floating deck with sun beds is an added feature for relaxation. Surrounded by the lush greenery and cooling breeze that sweeps across the waters, the scorching heat of the East cannot be felt at Jungle Beach. The beach itself inexplicable, only the sounds of the waves can be heard. Quiet and tranquil, the Jungle Beach is the only resort on the entire stretch. The Beach bar is an outdoor area and the resort's helipad is also located there. The entire beach is cleaned and maintained by the resort as there are no other buildings in the area.

The resort also has its own bio gas farm where food waste is used for the process. The fuel generated is used in the staff kitchen. Fresh vegetables are also sourced from the resort's very own organic gardens.

Ocean, sand, jungle... three strata that give a complete experience. ▢