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Sri Lanka fam with Uga Escapes, April 20–29, 2018



Touring Sri Lanka's coasts

Luxury hotel operator Uga Escapes partnered with Maitland & Knox and Tour Blue to host a group of UK tour operators in Sri Lanka. The group enjoyed Uga Escapes' luxury properties along with some of the best experiences the teardrop-shaped island has to offer. Selling Travel's Benjamin Cohen joined the tour.

Uga Escapes showcased not just its properties but also their proximity to key cultural sites. The trip also explored the lesser-known east coast of Sri Lanka, known for its beaches.

Highlights included a bike tour of Sri Lanka's first capital, the ancient city of Anuradhapura and a centre of religion in Sri Lanka with many crumbling temples; a walk up the rock fortress of Sigiriya to catch the sunset; and a visit to Dambatenne Tea Factory to see the tea plantations and house originally built by tea tycoon Sir Thomas Upton.

A long transfer down south to Yala National Park gave everyone a chance to enjoy the wild luxury of Uga's Chena Huts and a chance to go on safari in Yala National Park, which is well known for its leopard population but also has elephants and sloth bears.

The trip ended at Galle Fort with an afternoon walking the seaside ramparts before a stay at the colonial Galle Fort Hotel.

The group stayed at Ulagalla Wallawwa, Uga Jungle Beach Resort, Uga Bay Resort and Uga Chena Huts. For the Maitland and Knox brands, they stayed at Galle Fort Hotel and Thotalagala Bungalow.

Uga Darchambaud, Head of Sales UK and Ireland, Uga Escapes said: "Uga Escapes' strategy has always been to work closely with the travel

trade. Tour operators and agents may have a reasonable knowledge of Sri Lanka, but this type of trip focuses on the hotels, ground services as well as lots of unique local experiences along the way.

"Sri Lanka is bursting with different adventures and experiences and Uga has five great properties across the country, from the Cultural Triangle to Yala National Park. The destination and our properties are now sold by a diverse mix of large and niche tour operators."

Ian McIlwraith, Trailfinders said: "Sri Lanka is a perfect first step for anyone wanting to experience a different Asian culture without the shock."

Matt Parr, Audley Travel said: "Emphasise how good it is to have your own private chauffeur guide with you. You can head into markets, stop at roadside stalls and learn about the food, history, and culture."

ugaescapes.com



From left: The ancient city of Anuradhapura; Sir Thomas Upton's tea plantation house; an elusive sloth bear in Yala national Park; Koneswaran Temple at Trincomalee; the ramparts of Galle Fort; cooking traditional Sri Lankan fare at Ulagalla Wallawwa